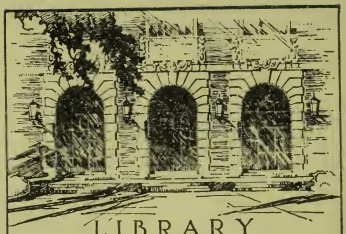
The Writings of Thomas De Quincey



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THE WORKS

OF

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

RIVERSIDE EDITION.

VOLUME III.

LITERARY REMINISCENCES;

FROM

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.

BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

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INTRODUCTION.

[THIS volume completes the autobiographic portion of De Quincey's works. The very full and free reference to his contemporaries renders it especially interesting to the student of English literature of this period, since De Quincey's associates were almost wholly of the guild of letters. One name occurs several times in connection with that of the Wordsworth family, the name of Professor Wilson, but in this volume no extended account is given of him. In a future volume will be given a sketch of Wilson, not hitherto published in any collection of De Quincey's writings.

No one can read De Quincey's references to the Wordsworth family, without perceiving a certain change of attitude from the first fervent idolatry. Without aiming to strike the balance in a question of this kind, it seems right to give the somewhat severe comments made upon the relation of De Quincey and Wordsworth, by the late Miss Harriet Martineau, who was a neighbor of both in Westmoreland. It occurs in her volume of "Biographical Sketches" collected from the columns of the "London Daily News."

"As years passed on, he not only became a more helpless victim to his prominent vice, but manifested an increasing insensibility to the most ordinary requisitions of honor and courtesy, to say nothing of gratitude and sincerity. In his hungry days in London he would not beg

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or borrow. Five years later he wrote to Wordsworth, in admiration and sympathy; received an invitation to his Westmoreland valley; went, more than once, within a few miles; and withdrew and returned to Oxford, unable to conquer his painful shyness; — returned at last to live there, in the very cottage which had been Wordsworth's; received for himself, his wife, and a growing family of children, an unintermitting series of friendly and neighborly offices; was necessarily admitted to much household confidence, and favored with substantial aid, which was certainly not given through any strong liking for his manners, conversation, or character. How did he recompense all this exertion and endurance on his behalf? In after years, when living (we believe) at Edinburgh, and pressed by debt, he did for once exert himself to write; and what he wrote was an exposure, in a disadvantageous light, of everything about the Wordsworths which he knew merely by their kindness. He wrote papers which were eagerly read, and of course duly paid for, in which Wordsworth's personal foibles were malignantly exhibited with ingenious aggravations. The infirmities of one member of the family, the personal blemish of another, and the human weaknesses of all, were displayed; and all for the purpose of deepening the dislike against Wordsworth himself, which the receiver of his money, the eater of his dinners, and the dreary provoker of his patience strove to excite. Moreover, he perpetrated an act of treachery scarcely paralleled, we hope, in the history of Literature. In the confidence of their most familiar days Wordsworth had communicated portions of his posthumous poem to his guest, who was perfectly well aware that the work was to rest in darkness and silence till after the Poet's death. In these magazine articles De Quincey — using for this atrocious purpose

his fine gift of memory — published a passage which he informed us was of far higher merit than anything else we had to expect. And what was Wordsworth's conduct under this unequalled experience of bad faith and bad feeling? While so many anecdotes were going of the Poet's fireside, the following ought to be added. An old friend was talking with him by that fireside, and mentioned De Quincey's magazine articles. Wordsworth begged to be spared any account of them, saying that the man had long passed away from the family life and mind; and he did not wish to ruffle himself in a useless way about a misbehavior which could not be remedied. The friend acquiesced, saying, 'Well, I will tell you only one thing that he says, and then we will talk of other things. He says your wife is too good for you.' The old Poet's dim eyes lighted up instantly, and he started from his seat, and flung himself against the mantelpiece, with his back to the fire, as he cried with loud enthusiasm, — 'And that's *true!* *There* he is right!' and his disgust and contempt for the traitor were visibly moderated.

"During a long course of years De Quincey went on dreaming always — sometimes scheming works of high value and great efficacy which were never to exist; promising largely to booksellers and others, and failing through a weakness so deep-seated that it should have prevented his making any promises. When his three daughters were grown up, and his wife was dead, he lived in a pleasant cottage at Lasswade, near Edinburgh — well known by name to those who have never seen its beauties, as the scene of Scott's early married life and first great achievements in literature. There, while the family fortunes were expressly made contingent on his abstinence from his drug, De Quincey did abstain, or observe mod

eration. His flow of conversation was then the delight of old acquaintance and admiring strangers, who came to hear the charmer and to receive the impression, which could never be lost, of the singular figure and countenance and the finely modulated voice, which were like nothing else in the world. It was a strange thing to look upon that fragile form, and features which might be those of a dying man, and to hear such utterances as his: now the strangest comments and insignificant incidents; now pregnant remarks on great subjects; and then, malignant gossip, virulent and base, but delivered with an air and a voice of philosophical calmness and intellectual commentary such as caused the disgust of the listener to be largely qualified with amusement and surprise. One good thing was, that nobody's name and fame could be really injured by anything De Quincey could say. There was such a grotesque air about the mode of his evil-speaking, and it was so gratuitous and excessive, that the hearer could not help regarding it as a singular sort of intellectual exercise, or an effort in the speaker to observe, for once, something outside of himself, rather than as any token of actual feeling toward the ostensible object.

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LITERARY REMINISCENCES

CHAPTER I.

LITERARY NOVITIATE.

It was in the year 1801, whilst yet at school, that I made my first literary acquaintance. This was with a gentleman now dead, and little, at any time, known in the literary world; indeed, not at all; for his authorship was confined to a department of religious literature as obscure and as narrow in its influence as any that can be named — viz. Swedenborgianism. Already, on the bare mention of that word, a presumption arises against any man, that, writing much (or writing at all) for a body of doctrines so apparently crazy as those of Mr. Swedenborg, a man must have bid adieu to all good sense and manliness of mind. Indeed, this is so much of a settled case, that even to have written *against* Mr. Swedenborg would be generally viewed as a suspicious act, requiring explanation, and not very easily admitting of it. *Mr.* Swedenborg I call him, because I understand that his title to call himself 'Baron,' is imaginary; or rather he never *did* call himself by any title of honor — that mistake having originated amongst his followers in this country, who

have chosen to designate him as the 'Honorable' and as the 'Baron' Swedenborg, by way of translating, to the ear of England, some one or other of those irrepresentable distinctions, *Legations*, *Rath*, *Hofrath*, &c., which are tossed about with so much profusion in the courts of continental Europe, on both sides the Baltic. For myself, I cannot think myself qualified to speak of any man's writings without a regular examination of some one or two among those which his admirers regard as his best performances. Yet, as any happened to fall in my way, I have looked into them; and the impression left upon my mind was certainly not favorable to their author. They labored, to my feeling, with two opposite qualities of annoyance, but which I believe not uncommonly found united in lunatics — excessive dulness or matter-of-factness in the execution, with excessive extravagance in the conceptions. The result, at least, was most unhappy: for, of all writers, Swedenborg is the only one I ever heard of who has contrived to strip even the shadowy world beyond the grave of all its mystery and all its awe. From the very heaven of heavens, he has rent away the veil; no need for seraphs to 'tremble while they gaze;' for the familiarity with which all objects are invested, makes it impossible that even poor mortals should find any reason to tremble. Until I saw this book, I had not conceived it possible to carry an atmosphere so earthy, and steaming with the vapors of earth, into regions which, by early connection in our infant thoughts with the sanctities of death, have a hold upon the reverential affections such as they rarely lose. In this view, I should conceive that Swedenborg, if it were at all possible for him to become a popular author, would, at the same time, become immensely mischievous. He would dereligionize men beyond all other authors whatsoever.

Little could this character of Swedenborg's writings — this, indeed, least of all — have been suspected from the temper, mind, or manners of my new friend. He was the most spiritual looking, the most saintly in outward aspect, of all human beings whom I have known throughout life. He was rather tall, pale, and thin; the most unfleshly, the most of a sublimated spirit dwelling already more than half in some purer world, that a poet could have imagined. He was already aged when I first knew him, a clergyman of the Church of England; which may seem strange in connection with his Swedenborgianism, but he was however so. He was rector of a large parish in a large town, the more active duties of which parish were discharged by his curate; but much of the duties within the church were still discharged by himself, and with such exemplary zeal, that his parishioners, afterwards celebrating the fiftieth anniversary, or *golden* jubilee of his appointment to the living, (the twenty-fifth anniversary is called in Germany the silver — the fiftieth, the golden jubilee,) went farther than is usual, in giving a public expression and a permanent shape to their sentiments of love and veneration. I am surprised, on reflection, that this venerable clergyman should have been unvexed by Episcopal censures. He might, and I dare say would, keep back the grosser parts of Swedenborg's views from a public display; but, in one point, it would not be easy for a man so conscientious to make a compromise between his ecclesiastical duty and his private belief; for I have since found, though I did not then know it, that Swedenborg held a very peculiar creed on the article of atonement. From the slight pamphlet which let me into this secret, I could not accurately collect the exact distinctions of his creed; but it was very different from that of the English Church.

However, my friend continued unvexed for a good deal more than fifty years, enjoying that peace, external as well as internal, which, by so eminent a title, belonged to a spirit so evangelically meek and dovelike. I mention him chiefly for the sake of describing his interesting house and household, so different from all which belong to this troubled age, and his impressive style of living. The house seemed almost monastic; and yet it stood in the centre of one of the largest, busiest, noisiest towns in England; and the whole household seemed to have stepped out of their places in some Vandyke, or even some Titian picture, from a forgotten century and another climate. On knocking at the door, which of itself seemed an outrage to the spirit of quietness which brooded over the place, you were received by an ancient man-servant in the sober livery which belonged traditionally to Mr. Clowes's family; for he was of a gentleman's descent, and had had the most finished education of a gentleman. This venerable old butler put me in mind always, by his noiseless steps, of the Castle of Indolence, where the porter or usher walked about in shoes that were shod with felt, lest any rude echoes might be roused. An ancient housekeeper was equally venerable, equally gentle in her deportment, quiet in her movements, and inaudible in her tread. One or other of these upper domestics, for the others rarely crossed my path, ushered me always into some room, expressing, by its furniture, its pictures, and its colored windows, the solemn tranquillity which, for half a century, had reigned in that mansion. Among the pictures were more than one of St. John, the beloved apostle, by Italian masters. Neither the features nor the expression were very wide of Mr. Clowes's own countenance; and had it been possible to forget the gross character of Swedenborg's reveries, or to substitute for these

fleshly dreams the awful visions of the Apocalypse, one might have imagined easily that the pure, saintly, and childlike evangelist had been once again recalled to this earth, and that this most quiet of mansions was some cell in the island of Patmos. Whence came the stained glass of the windows, I know not; and whether it were stained or painted. The revolutions of that art are known from Horace Walpole's account; and, nine years after this period, I found that, in Birmingham, where the art of staining glass was chiefly practised, no trifling sum was charged even for a vulgar lacing of no great breadth round a few drawing-room windows, which one of my friends thought fit to introduce as an embellishment. These windows, however, of my clerical friend were really '*storied* windows,' having Scriptural histories represented upon them. A crowning ornament to the library or principal room, was a sweet-toned organ, ancient, and elaborately carved in its wood-work, at which my venerable friend readily sate down, and performed the music of anthems as often as I asked him, sometimes accompanying it with his voice, which was tremulous from old age, but neither originally unmusical, nor (as might be perceived) untrained.

Often, from the storms and uproars of this world, I have looked back upon this most quiet and I believe most innocent abode, (had I said saintly, I should hardly have erred,) connecting it in thought with *Little Gidding*, the famous mansion (in Huntingdonshire, I believe) of the Farrers, an interesting family in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. Of the Farrers there is a long and circumstantial biographical account, and of the conventual discipline maintained at Little Gidding. For many years it was the rule at Gidding — and it was the wish of the Farrers to have transmitted that practice through suc-

ceeding centuries — that a musical or cathedral service should be going on at every hour of night and day in the chapel of the mansion. Let the traveller, at what hour he would, morning or evening, summer or winter, and in what generation or century soever, happen to knock at the gate of Little Gidding, it was the purpose of Nicholas Farrer — a sublime purpose — that always he should hear the blare of the organ, sending upwards its surging volumes of melody, God's worship for ever proceeding, anthems of praise for ever ascending, and *jubilates* echoing without end or known beginning. One stream of music, in fact, never intermitting, one vestal fire of devotional praise and thanksgiving, was to connect the beginnings with the ends of generations, and to link one century into another. Allowing for the sterner asceticism of N. Farrer — partly arising out of the times, partly out of personal character, and partly, perhaps, out of his travels in Spain — my aged friend's arrangement of the day, and the training of his household, might seem to have been modelled on the plans of Mr. Farrer, whom, however, he might never have heard of. There was also, in each house, the same union of religion with some cultivation of the ornamental arts, or some expression of respect for them. In each case, a monastic severity, that might, under other circumstances, have terminated in the gloom of a La Trappe, had been softened by English sociality, and by the habits of a gentleman's education, into a devotional pomp, reconcilable with Protestant views. When, however, remembering this last fact in Mr. Clowes's case, (the fact I mean of his liberal education,) I have endeavored to explain the possibility of one so much adorned by all the accomplishments of a high-bred gentleman, and one so truly pious, falling into the grossness — almost the sensuality — which appears to besiege the

visions of Swedenborg; I fancy that the whole may be explained out of the same cause which occasionally may be descried, through a distance of two complete centuries, as weighing heavily upon the Farrers — viz. the dire monotony of daily life, when visited by no irritations either of hope or fear — no hopes from ambition, no fears from poverty.

Nearly (if not quite) sixty years did my venerable friend inhabit that same parsonage house, without any incident more personally interesting to himself than a cold or a sore throat. And I suppose that he resorted to Swedenborg — reluctantly, perhaps, at the first — as to a book of fairy tales connected with his professional studies. And one thing I am bound to add in candor, which may have had its weight with him, that more than once, on casually turning over a volume of Swedenborg, I have certainly found most curious and felicitous passages of comment — passages which extracted a brilliant meaning from numbers, circumstances, or trivial accidents, apparently without significance or object, and gave to things, without a place or a habitation in the critic's regard, a value as hieroglyphics or cryptical ciphers, which struck me as elaborately ingenious. This acknowledgment I make not so much in praise of Swedenborg, whom I must still continue to think a madman, as in excuse for Mr. Clowes. It may easily be supposed, that a person of Mr. Clowes's consideration and authority, was not regarded with indifference by the general body of the Swedenborgians. At his motion it was, I believe, that a society was formed for procuring and encouraging a translation into English, of Swedenborg's entire works, most of which are written in Latin. Several of these translations are understood to have been executed personally by Mr. Clowes; and in this obscure way, for anything I know.

he may have been an extensive author. But it shows the upright character of the man, that never, in one instance, did he seek to bias my opinions in this direction. Upon every other subject, he trusted me confidentially — and, notwithstanding my boyish years, (15 – 16,) as his equal. His regard for me, when thrown by accident in his way, had arisen upon his notice of my fervent simplicity, and, my unusual thoughtfulness. Upon these merits, I had gained the honorable distinction of a general invitation to his house, without exception as to days and hours, when few others could boast of any admission at all. The common ground on which we met was literature — more especially the Greek and Roman literature ; and much he exerted himself, in a spirit of the purest courtesy, to meet my animation upon these themes. But the interest on his part was too evidently a secondary interest in *me*, for whom he talked, and not in the subject : he spoke much from memory, as it were of things that he had once felt, and little from immediate sympathy with the author ; and his animation was artificial, though his courtesy, which prompted the effort, was the truest and most unaffected possible.

The connection between us must have been interesting to an observer ; for, though I cannot say with Wordsworth, of old Daniel and his grandson, that there were ' ninety good years of fair and foul weather ' between us, there were, however, sixty, I imagine, at the least ; whilst as a bond of connection, there was nothing at all that I know of beyond a common tendency to reverie, which is a bad link for a *social* connection. The little ardor, meantime, with which he had, for many years, participated in the interests of this world, or all that it inherits, was now rapidly departing. Daily and consciously he was loosening all ties which bound him to earlier recollections ; and,

in particular, I remember — because the instance was connected with my last farewell visit as it proved — that for some time he was engaged daily in renouncing with solemnity, (though often enough in cheerful words,) book after book of classical literature, in which he had once taken particular delight. Several of these, after taking his final glance at a few passages to which a pencil reference in the margin pointed his eye, he delivered to me as memorials in time to come of himself. The last of the books given to me under these circumstances, was a Greek 'Odyssey,' in Clarke's edition. 'This,' said he, 'is nearly the sole book remaining to me of my classical library — which, for some years, I have been dispersing amongst my friends. Homer I retained to the last, and the "Odyssey," by preference to the "Iliad," both in compliance with my own taste, and because this very copy was my chosen companion for evening amusement, during my freshman's term at Trinity College, Cambridge — whither I went early in the spring of 1743. Your own favorite Grecian is Euripides; but still you must value — we must all value — Homer. I, even as old as I am, could still read him with delight; and as long as any merely human composition ought to occupy my time, I should have made an exception in behalf of this solitary author. But I am a soldier of Christ; the enemy, the last enemy, cannot be far off; *sarcinas colligere* is, at my age, the watchword for every faithful sentinel, hourly to keep watch and ward, to wait and to be vigilant. This very day, I have taken my farewell glance at Homer, for I must no more be found seeking my pleasure amongst the works of man; and, that I may not be tempted to break my resolution, I make over this my last book to you.'

Words to this effect, uttered with his usual solemnity, accompanied his gift; and, at the same time, he added,

without any separate comment, a little pocket Virgil — the one edited by Alexander Cunningham, the bitter antagonist of Bentley — with a few annotations placed at the end. The act was in itself a solemn one; something like taking the veil for a nun — a final abjuration of the world's giddy agitations. And yet to him — already and for so long a time linked so feebly to anything that could be called the world, and living in a seclusion so profound — it was but as if an anchorite should retire from his outer to his inner cell. Me, however, it impressed powerfully in after years; because this act of self-dedication to the next world, and of parting from the intellectual luxuries of this, was also, in fact, though neither of us at the time knew it to be such, the scene of his final parting with myself. Immediately after his solemn speech, on presenting me with the 'Odyssey,' he sat down to the organ, sang a hymn or two, then chanted part of the liturgy, and, finally, at my request, performed the anthem so well known in the English Church service — the collect for the seventh Sunday after Trinity — (*Lord of all power and might, &c.*) It was summer — about half after nine in the evening; the light of day was still lingering, and just strong enough to illuminate the Crucifixion, the Stoning of the Proto-martyr, and other grand emblazonries of the Christian faith, which adorned the rich windows of his library. Knowing the early hours of his household, I now received his usual fervent adieus — which, without the words, had the sound and effect of a benediction — felt the warm pressure of his hand, saw dimly the outline of his venerable figure, more dimly his saintly countenance, and quitted that gracious presence, which, in this world, I was destined no more to revisit. The night was one in the first half of July, 1802; in the second half of which, or very early in August, I quitted school clandes-

tinely, and consequently the neighborhood of Mr. Clowes. Some years after, I saw his death announced in all the public journals, as having occurred at Leamington Spa, then in the springtime of its medicinal reputation. Farewell, early friend! holiest of men whom it has been my lot to meet! Yes, I repeat, thirty-five years are past since then, and I have yet seen few men approaching to this venerable clergyman in paternal benignity — none certainly in child-like purity, apostolic holiness, or in perfect alienation of heart from the spirit of this fleshly world.

I have delineated the habits and character of Mr. Clowes at some length, chiefly because a connection is rare and interesting between parties so widely asunder in point of age — one a schoolboy, and the other almost an octogenarian: to quote a stanza from one of the most spiritual sketches of Wordsworth —

> 'We talked with open heart and tongue,
> Affectionate and free —
> A pair of friends, though I was young,
> And Matthew seventy-three.'

I have stated a second reason for this record, in the fact that Mr. Clowes was the first of my friends who had any connection with the press. At one time I have reason to believe that this connection was pretty extensive, though not publicly avowed; and so far from being lucrative, that at first I believe it to have been expensive to him; and whatever profits might afterwards arise, were applied, as much of his regular income, to the benefit of others. Here, again, it seems surprising that a spirit so beneficent and, in the amplest sense, charitable, could coalesce in any views with Swedenborg, who, in some senses, was not charitable. Swedenborg had been scandalized by a notion which, it seems, he found prevalent

amongst the poor of the Continent — viz., that, if riches were a drag and a negative force on the road to religious perfection, poverty must be positive title *per se*, to the favor of Heaven. Grievously offended with this error, he came almost to hate poverty as a presumptive indication of this offensive heresy; scarcely would he allow it an indirect value, as removing in many cases the occasions or incitements of evil. No: being in itself neutral and indifferent, he argued that it had become erroneously a ground of presumptuous hope; whilst the rich man, aware of his danger, was, in some degree, armed against it by fear and humility. And, in this course of arguing and of corresponding feeling, Mr. Swedenborg had come to hate the very name of a poor candidate for Heaven, as bitterly as a sharking attorney hates the applications of a pauper client. Yet so entirely is it true, that 'to the pure, all things are pure,' and that perfect charity 'thinketh no ill,' but is gifted with a power to transmute all things into its own resemblance — so entirely is all this true, that this most spiritual, and, as it were, disembodied of men, could find delight in the dreams of the very 'fleshliest incubus' that has intruded amongst heavenly objects; and, secondly, this benignest of men found his own pure feelings not outraged by one who threw a withering scowl over the far larger half of his fellow-creatures.

Concurrently with this acquaintance, so impressive and so elevating to me, from the unusual sanctity of Mr. Clowes's character, I formed another with a well-known coterie, more avowedly, and in a more general sense, literary, resident at Liverpool or its neighborhood. In my sixteenth year, I had accompanied my mother and family on a summer's excursion to Everton, a well-known village upon the heights immediately above Liverpool,

though by this time I believe it has thrown out so many fibres of connection, as to have become a mere quarter or suburban 'process,' (to speak by anatomical phrase,) of the great town below it. In those days, however, distant by one third of a century from ours, Everton was still a distinct village, (for a mile of ascent is worth three of level ground, in the way of effectual separation;) it was delightfully refreshed by marine breezes, though raised above the sea so far, that its thunders could be heard only under favorable circumstances. There we had a cottage for some months; and the nearest of our neighbors happened to be that Mr. Clarke the banker, to whom acknowledgments are made in the *Lorenzo the Magnificent*, for aid in procuring MSS. and information from Italy. This gentleman called on my mother, merely in the general view of offering neighborly attentions to a family of strangers. I, as the eldest of my brothers, and already with strong literary propensities, had received a general invitation to his house. Thither I went, indeed, early and late; and there I met Mr. Roscoe, Dr. Currie, (who had just at that time published his Life and Edition of Burns,) and Mr. Shepherd of Gatacre, the author of some works on Italian literature, (particularly a Life of *Poggio Bracciolini*,) and, since then, well known to all England by his Reform politics.

There were other members of this society — some, like myself, visitors merely to that neighborhood; but those I have mentioned were the chief. Here I had an early opportunity of observing the natural character and tendencies of merely literary society — by which society I mean all such as, having no strong distinctions in power of thinking or in native force of character, are yet raised into circles of pretension and mark, by the fact of having written a book, or of holding a notorious connection with

some department or other of the periodical press. No society is so vapid and uninteresting in its natural quality, none so cheerless and petrific in its influence upon others. Ordinary people, in such company, are in general repressed from uttering with cordiality the natural expression of their own minds or temperaments, under a vague feeling of some peculiar homage due, or at least customarily paid, to those lions: such people are no longer at their ease, or masters of their own natural motions in their own natural freedom; whilst indemnification of any sort is least of all to be looked for from the literary dons who have diffused this unpleasant atmosphere of constraint. They disable others, and yet do nothing themselves to fill up the void they have created. One and all — unless by accident people of unusual originality, power, and also nerve, so as to be able without trepidation to face the expectations of men — the literary class labor under two opposite disqualifications for a good tone of conversation. From causes visibly explained, they are either spoiled by the vices of reserve, and of over-consciousnesss directed upon themselves — this is one extreme; or, where manliness of mind has prevented this, beyond others of equal or inferior natural power, they are apt to be desperately commonplace. The first defect is an accident arising out of the rarity of literary pretensions; and would rapidly subside as the proportion became larger of practising literati to the mass of educated people. But the other is an adjunct scarcely separable from the ordinary prosecution of a literary career, and growing in fact out of literature *per se*, as literature is generally understood. That same day, says Homer, which makes a man a slave, robs him of half his value. That same hour which first awakens a child to the consciousness of being observed and to the sense of admiration, strips it of its freedom and unpre-

meditated graces of motion. Awkwardness at the least — and too probably as a consequence of *that*, affectation and conceit — follow hard upon the consciousness of special notice or admiration. The very attempt to disguise embarrassment, too often issues in a secondary and more marked embarrassment.

Another mode of reserve arises with some literary men, who believe themselves to be in possession of novel ideas. Cordiality of communication, or ardor of dispute, might betray them into a revelation of those golden thoughts, sometimes into a necessity of revealing them, since, without such aid, it might be impossible to maintain theirs in the discussion. On this principle it was — a principle of deliberate unsocial reserve — that Adam Smith is said to have governed his conversation; he professed to put a bridle on his words, lest by accident a pearl should drop out of his lips amongst the vigilant bystanders. And in no case would he have allowed himself to be engaged in a disputation, because both the passions of dispute and the necessities of dispute are alike apt to throw men off their guard. A most unamiable reason it certainly is, which places a man in one constant attitude of self-protection against petty larceny. And yet, humiliating as that may be to human nature, the furtive propensities or instincts of petty larceny are diffused most extensively through all ranks — directed, too, upon a sort of property far more tangible and more ignoble as respects the possible motives of the purloiner, than any property in subjects purely intellectual. Rather more than ten years ago, a literary man of the name of Alton, published, some little time before his own death, a very searching essay upon this chapter of human integrity — arraying a large list of common cases, (cases of hats, gloves, umbrellas, books, newspapers, &c.) where the claim of ownership, left to

itself and unsupported by accidents of shame and exposure, appeared to be weak indeed amongst classes of society prescriptively 'respectable.' And yet, for a double reason, literary larceny is even more to be feared, both because it is countenanced by a less ignoble quality of temptation, and because it is far more easy of achievement — *so* easy, indeed, that it may be practised without any clear accompanying consciousness.

I have myself witnessed or been a party to a case of the following kind: — A new truth — suppose for example, a new doctrine or a new theory — was communicated to a very able man in the course of conversation, not *didactically*, or directly *as* a new truth, but *polemically* communicated as an argument in the current of a dispute. What followed? Necessarily it followed that a very able man would not be purely *passive* in receiving this new truth; that he would *co-operate* with the communicator in many ways — as by raising objections, by half dissipating his own objections, and in a variety of other co-agencies. In such cases, a very clever man does in effect half-generate the new idea for himself, but then he does this entirely under your leading; you stand ready at each point of possible deviation, to warn him away from the wrong turn — from the turn which leads nowhither or the turn which leads astray. Yet the final result has been, that the *catechumen*, under the full consciousness of *self*-exertion, has so far confounded his just and true belief of having contributed to the evolution of the doctrine *quoad* his own apprehension of it, with the far different case of having evolved the truth itself into light, as to go off with the firm impression that the doctrine had been a product of his own. There is therefore ground enough for the jealousy of Adam Smith, since a robbery may be committed unconsciously; though, by the way, it is not a

peril peculiarly applicable to himself, who has not so much succeeded in discovering new truths as in establishing a logical connection amongst old ones.

On the other hand, it is not by reserve, whether of affectation or of Smithian jealousy, that the majority of literary people offend — at least not by the latter; for, so far from having much novelty to protect against pirates, the most general effect of literary pursuits is to tame down all points of originality to one standard of insipid monotony. I shall not go into the reasons for this. I make my appeal to the matter of fact. Try a Parisian populace, very many of whom are highly cultivated by reading, against a body of illiterate rustics. Mr. Scott of Aberdeen, in his 'Second Tour to Paris,' (1815,) tells us, that on looking over the shoulder of poor stall women selling trifles in the street, he usually found them reading Voltaire, Rousseau, or even (as I think he adds) Montesquieu; but, notwithstanding the polish which such reading both presumes as a previous condition and produces as a natural effect, yet no people could be more lifeless in their minds, or more barren of observing faculties than they; and so he describes them. Words! words! nothing but words! On the other hand, listen to the conversation of a few scandalous village dames collected at a tea-table. Vulgar as the spirit may be which possesses them, and not seldom malicious, still how full of animation and of keen perception it will generally be found, and of a learned spirit of connoisseurship in human character, by comparison with the *fade* generalities, and barren recollections of mere literati!

All this was partially illustrated in the circle to which I was now presented. Mr. Clarke was not an author, and he was by much the most interesting person of the whole. He had travelled, and, particularly, he had travelled in Italy — then an aristocratic distinction; had a small, but

interesting picture gallery; and, at this time, amused himself by studying Greek, for which purpose he and myself met at sunrise every morning through the summer, and read Æschylus together. These meetings, at which we sometimes had the company of any stranger who might happen to be an amateur in Greek, were pleasant enough to my schoolboy vanity — placing me in the position of teacher and guide, to men old enough to be my grandfathers. But the dinner parties, at which the literati sometimes assembled in force, were far from being equally amusing. Mr. Roscoe was simple and manly in his demeanor; but there was the feebleness of a mere *belle-lettrist*, a mere man of *virtù*, in the style of his sentiments on most subjects. Yet he was a politician, and took an ardent interest in politics, and wrote upon politics — all which are facts usually presuming some vigor of mind. And he wrote, moreover, on the popular side, and with a boldness which, in that day, when such politics were absolutely disreputable, seemed undeniably to argue great moral courage. But these were accidents arising out of his connection with the Whig party, or (to speak more accurately) with the *Opposition* party in Parliament; by whom he was greatly caressed. Mr. Fox, the Duchess of Devonshire, Mr. Sheridan, and all the *powers* on that side the question, showed him the most marked attention in a great variety of forms; and this it was, not any native propensity for such speculations, which drove him into pamphleteering upon political questions. Mr. Fox (himself the very feeblest of party writers) was probably sincere in his admiration of Mr. Roscoe's pamphlets; and did seriously think him, as I know that he described him in private letters, an antagonist well matched against Burke; and *that* he afterwards became in form. The rest of the world wondered at his presumption, or at his gross miscal-

rulation of his own peculiar powers. An eminent person, in after years, (about 1815,) speaking to me of Mr. Roscoe's political writings, especially those which had connected his name with Burke, declared that he always felt of him in that relation, not so much as of a feeble man, but absolutely as of a *Sporus*, (that was his very expression,) or a man emasculated. Right or wrong in his views, he showed the most painful defect of good sense and prudence, in confronting his own understanding, so plain and homely, with the Machiavelian Briareus of a hundred arms — the Titan whom he found in Burke; all the advantages of a living antagonist over a dead one, could not compensate odds so fearful in original power.

It was a striking illustration of the impotence of mere literature against natural power and mother wit, that the only man who was considered indispensable in these parties, for giving life and impulse to their vivacity, was a tailor; and not, I was often assured, a person deriving a designation from the craft of those whose labors he supported as a capitalist, but one who drew his own honest daily bread from his own honest needle, except when he laid it aside for the benefit of drooping literati, who needed to be watered with his wit. Wit, perhaps, in a proper sense, he had not — it was rather drollery, and sometimes, even buffoonery. These, in the lamentable absence of the tailor, could be furnished of an inferior quality by Mr. Shepherd, who (as may be imagined from this fact) had but little dignity in private life. I know not how far he might alter in these respects; but certainly, at the time, (1801 – 2,) he was decidedly or could be a buffoon; and seemed even ambitious of the title, by courting notice for his grotesque manner and coarse stories, more than was altogether compatible with the pretensions of a scholar and a clergyman. I must have leave

to think that such a man could not have emerged from any great university, or from any but a sectarian training. Indeed, about Poggio himself there were circumstances which would have indisposed any regular clergyman of the Church of England or of the Scottish Kirk, to usher him into the literature of his country. With what coarseness and low buffoonery have I heard this Mr. Shepherd in those days run down the bishops then upon the bench, but especially those of any public pretensions or reputation, as Horsley and Porteus, and, in connection with them, the pious Mrs. Hannah More! Her he could not endure. . . . . .

Of this gentleman having said something disparaging, I am bound to go on and add, that I believe him to have been at least a truly upright man — talking often wildly, but incapable of doing a conscious wrong to any man, be his party what it might; and, in the midst of fun or even buffoonery, a real, and, upon occasion, a stern patriot. Mr. Canning and others he opposed to the teeth upon the Liverpool hustings; and would take no bribe, as others did, from literary feelings of sympathy, or (which is so hard for an amiable mind to resist) from personal applications of courtesy and respect. Amusing it is to look back upon any political work of Mr. Shepherd's, as upon his 'Tour to France' in 1815, and to know that the pale pink of his Radicalism was then accounted deep, deep scarlet.

Nothing can better serve to expound the general force of intellect amongst the Liverpool coterie than the quality of their poetry, and the general standard which they set up in poetry. Not that even in their errors, as regarded poetry, they were of a magnitude to establish any standard or authority, in their own persons. Imitable or seducing, there could be nothing in persons who wrote

erses occasionally, and as a *πάρεργον* or by-labor, and were themselves the most timid of imitators. But to me, who, in that year, 1801, already knew of a grand renovation of poetic power — of a new birth in poetry, interesting not so much to England as to the human mind — it was secretly amusing to contrast the little artificial usages of their petty traditional knack, with the natural forms of a divine art — the difference being pretty much as between an American lake, Ontario, or Superior, and a carp pond or a tench preserve. Mr. Roscoe had just about this time published a translation from the *Balia* of Luigi Tansillo — a series of dullish lines, with the moral purpose of persuading young women to suckle their own children. The brilliant young Duchess of Devonshire, some half century ago, had, for a frolic — a great lady's caprice — set a precedent in this way; against which, however, in that rank, medical men know that there is a good deal to be said; and in ranks more extensive than those of the Duchess, it must be something of an Irish bull to suppose any *general* neglect of this duty, since, upon so large a scale, whence could come the vicarious nurses? There is, therefore, no great sense in the fundamental idea of the poem, because the abuse denounced cannot be large enough; but the prefatory sonnet, addressed to the translator's wife, as one at whose maternal breast 'six son's successive' had hung in infancy — this is about the one sole bold, natural thought, or natural expression of feeling, to which Mr. Roscoe had committed himself in verse. Everywhere else, the most timid and blind servility to the narrowest of conventional usages, conventional ways of viewing things, conventional forms of expression, marks the style. For example, Italy is always *Italia*, Scotland *Scotia*, France *Gallia;* so inveterately had the mind, in

this school of feeling, been trained, alike in the highest things and in the lowest, to a horror of throwing itself boldly upon the great *realities* of life: even names must be fictions for *their* taste. Yet what comparison between '*France*, an Ode,' and '*Gallia*, an Ode?' — Dr. Currie was so much occupied with his professional duties, that of him I saw but little. His edition of Burns was just then published, (I think in that very month,) and in everybody's hands. At that time, he was considered not unjust to the memory of the man, and (however constitutionally phlegmatic, or with little enthusiasm, at least in external show) not much below the mark in his appreciation of the poet.

So stood matters some twelve or fourteen years; after which period, a 'craze' arose on the subject of Burns, which allowed no voice to be heard but that of zealotry and violent partisanship. The first impulse to this arose out of an oblique collision between Lord Jeffrey and Mr. Wordsworth; the former having written a disparaging critique upon Burns's pretensions — a little, perhaps, too much colored by the fastidiousness of long practice in the world, but, in the main, speaking some plain truths on the quality of Burns's understanding, as expressed in his epistolary compositions. Upon which, in his celebrated letter to Mr. James Gray, the friend of Burns, himself a poet, and then a master in the High School of Edinburgh, Mr. Wordsworth commented with severity, proportioned rather to his personal resentments towards Lord Jeffrey than to the quantity of wrong inflicted upon Burns. Mr. Wordsworth's letter, in so far as it was a record of embittered feeling, might have perished; but, as it happened to embody some profound criticisms, applied to the art of biography, and especially to the delicate task of following a man of original genius

through his personal infirmities or his constitutional aberrations — this fact, and its relation to Burns and the author's name, have all combined to embalm it. Its momentary effect, in conjunction with Lord Jeffrey's article, was to revive the interest (which for some time had languished under the oppression of Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron) in all that related to Burns. Fresh Lives appeared in a continued succession, until upon the death of Lord Byron in 1824, Mr. Allan Cunningham, who had personally known Burns, so far as a boy *could* know a mature man, gave a new impulse to the interest, by an impressive paper, in which he contrasted the circumstances of Burns's death with those of Lord Byron's; and also the two funerals — both of which, one altogether, and the other in part, Mr. Cunningham had personally witnessed. A man of genius, like Mr. Cunningham, throws a new quality of interest upon all which he touches; and having since brought fresh research and the illustrative power of the arts to bear upon the subject, and all this having gone on concurrently with the great modern revolution in literature — that is, the great extension of a *popular* interest, through the astonishing reductions of price — the result is, that Burns has, at length, become a national, and, therefore, in a certain sense, a privileged subject, which, in a perfect sense, he was *not*, until the controversial management of his reputation had irritated the public attention. Dr. Currie did not address the same alert condition of the public feeling, nor, by many hundred degrees, so *diffused* a condition of any feeling which might imperfectly exist, as a man must consciously address in these days, whether as the biographer or the critic of Burns. The lower-toned enthusiasm of the public was not of a quality to irritate any little enthusiasm which the worthy Doctor might have felt. The

public of that day felt with regard to Burns exactly as with regard to Bloomfield — not that the quality of his poems was then the staple of the interest, but the extraordinary fact that a ploughman or a lady's shoemaker should have written any poems at all. The sole difference in the two cases, as regarded by the public of that day, was, that Burns's case was terminated by a premature, and, for the public, a very sudden death: this gave a personal interest to his case, which was wanting in the other; and a direct result of this was, that his executors were able to lay before the world a series of his letters recording his opinions upon a considerable variety of authors, and his feelings under many ordinary occasions of life.

Dr. Currie, therefore, if phlegmatic, as he certainly was, must be looked upon as upon a level with the public of his own day — a public how different, different by how many centuries, from the world of this present 1837! One thing I remember which powerfully illustrates the difference. Burns, as we all know, with his peculiarly wild and almost ferocious spirit of independence, came a generation too soon. In this day, he would have been forced to do that, clamorously called upon to do that, and would have found his pecuniary interest in doing that, which in his own generation merely to attempt doing, loaded him with the reproach of Jacobinism. It must be remembered that the society of Liverpool wits, on whom my retrospect is now glancing, were all Whigs — all, indeed, fraternizers with French republicanism. Yet so it was, that — not once, not twice, but daily almost, in the numerous conversations naturally elicited by this Liverpool monument to Burns's memory — I heard every one, clerk or layman, heartily agreeing to tax Burns with ingratitude and with pride falsely directed, because he sate uneasily or restively under the bridle-hand of his

noble self-called '*patrons*.' Aristocracy, then — the essential spirit of aristocracy — this I found was not less erect and clamorous amongst partisan democrats — democrats who were such merely in a party sense of supporting his Majesty's Opposition against his Majesty's servants — that it was or could be among the most bigoted of the professed feudal aristocrats. For my part, at this moment, when all the world was reading Currie's monument to the memory of Burns and the support of his family, I felt and avowed my feeling most loudly — that Burns was wronged, was deeply, memorably wronged. A £10 bank note, by way of subscription for a few copies of an early edition of his poems — this is the outside that I could ever see proof given of Burns having received anything in the way of *patronage;* and doubtless this would have been gladly returned, but from the dire necessity of dissembling.

Lord Glencairn is the 'patron' for whom Burns appears to have felt the most sincere respect. Yet even he — did he give him more than a seat at his dinner table? Lord Buchan again, whose liberalities are by this time pretty well appreciated in Scotland, exhorts Burns, in a tone of one preaching upon a primary duty of life, to exemplary gratitude towards a person who had given him absolutely nothing at all. The man has not yet lived to whose happiness it was more essential that he should live unencumbered by the sense of obligation; and, on the other hand, the man has not lived upon whose independence as professing benefactors so many people practised, or who found so many others ready to ratify and give value to their pretences.* Him. whom beyond most

* Jacobinism — although the seminal principle of all political evil in all ages alike of advanced civilization — is natural to the heart of man, and, in a qualified sense, may be meritorious. A good man, a

men, nature had created with the necessity of conscious independence, all men besieged with the assurance that he was, must be, ought to be dependent; nay, that it was his primary duty to be grateful for his dependence. I have not looked into any edition of Burns, except once for a quotation, since this year 1801 — when I read the whole of Currie's edition, and had opportunities of meeting the editor — and once subsequently upon occasion of a fifth or supplementary volume being published. I know not, therefore, how this matter has been managed by succeeding editors, such as Allan Cunningham, far more capable of understanding Burns's situation, from the previous struggles of their own honorable lives, and Burns's feelings from something of congenial power.

I, in this year, 1801, when in the company of Dr. Currie, did not forget, and, with some pride I say that I stood alone in remembering, the very remarkable position of Burns: not merely that, with his genius, and with the intellectual pretensions, generally, of his family, he should have been called to a life of early labor, and of labor

high-minded man, in certain circumstances, *must* be a Jacobin in a certain sense. The aspect under which Burns's Jacobinism appears is striking: there is a thought which an observing reader will find often recurring, which expresses its peculiar bitterness. It is this: the necessity which in old countries exists for the laborer humbly to beg *permission* that he may labor. To eat in the sweat of a man's brow — that is bad; and that is a curse, and pronounced such by God. But when *that* is all, the laborer is by comparison happy. The second curse makes *that* a jest: he must sue, he must sneak, he must fawn like an Oriental slave, in order to win his fellow-man, in Burns's indignant words: — 'To give him *leave* to toil.' That was the scorpion thought that was for ever shooting its sting into Burns's meditations, whether forward-looking or backward-looking; and that considered, there arises a world of allowance for that vulgar bluster of independence which Lord Jeffrey, with so much apparent reason, charges upon his prose writings.

unhappily not prosperous, but also that he, by accident about the proudest of human spirits, should have been by accident summoned, beyond all others, to eternal recognitions of some mysterious gratitude, which he owed to some mysterious patrons little and great, whilst yet of all men, perhaps, he reaped the least obvious or known benefit from any patronage that has ever been put on record. Most men, if they reap little from patronage, are liberated from the claims of patronage; or if they are summoned to a galling dependency, have at least the fruits of their dependency. But it was this man's unhappy fate — with an early and previous irritability on this very point — to find himself saddled, by his literary correspondents, with all that was odious in dependency, whilst he had every hardship to face that is most painful in unbefriended poverty.

On this view of the case, I talked, then, being a schoolboy, with and against the first editor of Burns: I did not, and I do not, profess to admire the letters, (that is, the prose,) all or any, of Burns. I felt that they were liable to the charges of Lord Jeffrey, and to others beside; that they do not even express the natural vigor of Burns's mind, but are at once vulgar, tawdry, coarse, and commonplace; neither was I a person to affect any profound sympathy with the general character and temperament of Burns, which has often been described as 'of the earth, earthy' — unspiritual — animal — beyond those of most men equally intellectual. But still I comprehended his situation; I had for ever ringing in my ears, during that summer of 1801, those groans which ascended to heaven from his over-burthened heart — those harrowing words, *To give him leave to toil*,' which record almost a reproach to the ordinances of God — and I felt that upon him, amongst all the children of labor, the primal curse

had fallen heaviest and sunk deepest. Feelings such as these I had the courage to express: a personal compliment, or so, I might now and then hear; but all were against me on the *matter*. Dr. Currie said — 'Poor Burns! such notions had been his ruin;' Mr. Shepherd continued to draw from the subject some scoff or growl at Mr. Pitt and the Excise; the laughing tailor told us a good story of some proud beggar; Mr. Clarke proposed that I should write a Greek inscription for a cenotaph which he was to erect in his garden to the memory of Burns; — and so passed away the solitary protestation on behalf of Burns's jacobinism, together with the wine and the roses, and the sea-breezes of that same Everton, in that same summer of 1801. Mr. Roscoe is dead, and has found time since then to be half forgotten; Dr. Currie, the physician, has been found 'unable to heal himself;' Mr. Shepherd of Gatacre is a name and a shadow; Mr. Clarke is a shadow without a name; the tailor, who set the table in a roar, is dust and ashes; and three men at the most remain of all who, in those convivial meetings, held it right to look down upon Burns as upon one whose spirit was rebellious overmuch against the institutions of man, and jacobinical in a sense which 'men of property' and master manufacturers will never brook, albeit democrats by profession.

So passed my novitiate as a literary aspirant, and in circles such as these. The next persons of eminence whom I saw were, with few exceptions, in the circles of London; and these were Sir Humphry Davy, Professor Wilson, Mr. Godwin, Mrs. Siddons, Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Hannah More and her sisters, Walking Stewart, Dr. Beddoes, Mr. Abernethy, Charles Lamb, Mr. Hazlitt, Dr. Parr, and others of whom I should say a passing word or two according to the circumstances, slight or ample, under which I saw them.

CHAPTER II.

SIR HUMPHRY DAVY — MR. GODWIN — MRS. GRANT.

Sir Humphry Davy, of all those whom I have just mentioned — nay, of all the eminent persons whom I have ever seen even by a casual glimpse — was the most agreeable to know on the terms of a slight acquaintance. What he might have proved upon a closer intimacy, I cannot say; not having had the honor of any such connection with him. My acquaintance had never gone far enough to pass the barrier of *strangership*, and the protection which lies in that consciousness, reciprocally felt; for, if friendship and confidential intimacy have the power to confer privileges, there are other privileges which they take away; and many times it is better to be privileged as the 'stranger' of a family than as its friend. Some I have known who, therefore, only called a man their friend, that they might have a license for taking liberties with him. Sir Humphry, I have no reason to believe, would have altered for the worse on a closer connection. But for myself I know him only within ceremonious bounds; and I must say that nowhere, before or since, have I seen a man who had so felicitously caught the fascinating tone of high-bred urbanity which distinguishes the best part of the British nobility. The first time of my seeing him was at the *Courier* office, in a drawing-room then occupied by Mr. Coleridge, and as a guest of that

gentleman: this must have been either in 1808 or 1809 Sir Humphry (I forget whether then a baronet, but I think not) had promised to drink tea with Mr. Coleridge, on his road to a meeting of the Royal Society; before which learned body he was on that evening to read some paper or other of his own composition. I had the honor to be invited as sole 'respondent' to the learned philosopher; sole supporter of the antisthrope in our choral performance. It sounded rather appalling to be engaged in a glee for three voices, with two performers such as these; and I trepidated a little as I went up stairs, having previously understood that the great man was already come. The door was thrown open by the servant who announced me; and I saw at once, in full proportions before me, the full-length figure of the young *savant*, not, perhaps above ten years older than myself, whose name already filled all the post-horns of Europe, and levied homage from Napoleon. He was a little below the middle height; agreeable in his person, and amiable in the expression of his countenance. His dress was elaborately accurate and fashionable — no traces of soot or furnace *there;* it might be said, also, that it was youthful and almost gay in its character. But what chiefly distinguished him from other men, was the captivating — one might call it the *radiant* — courtesy of his manner. It was at once animated, and chastised by good-breeding; graceful, and, at the same time, gracious.

From a person so eminent it would not have been a sufficient encouragement that his manner should be, in a *passive* sense, courteous. This would have expressed only a consciousness of what was due to himself. But Sir Humphry's manner was conciliatory and intentionally winning. To a person as obscure as myself, it held out the flattering expressions of a wish to recommend himself, an assurance of interest in your person, and a desire

both to know and to be known. In such expressions of feeling, when they are borne upon the very surface of the manners, and scattered like sunbeams indiscriminately upon all who fall within their range, doubtless there must be something of artifice and a polished hypocrisy. And nobody can more readily acknowledge than myself the integrity which lies at the bottom of our insular reserve and moroseness. Two sound qualities are at the root of these unpleasant phenomena — modesty or unpresumingness in the first place, and sincerity in the second. To be impudent was so much of the essence of profligacy in the ideas of the ancients, that the one became the most ordinary expression * for the other; and sincerity, again, or directness of purpose, is so much of the essence of conscientiousness, that we take *obliquity* or *crookedness* for one way of expounding dishonesty or depravity of the moral sense — and, according to their natural tendencies, no doubt this is true. But such things admit of many modifications. Without absolute dissimulation, it is allow-

* Viz. in the word *improbus*. But so defective are all dictionaries, that there is some difficulty in convincing scholars that the leading idea of *improbus*, its sole original idea is — impudence, boldness, or audacity. Great is the incoherency and absurdity of learned men in questions of philology. Thus Hayne, in a vain attempt to make out (*consistently* to make out) the well known words, 'labor improbus omnia vincit,' says, that *improbus* means *pertinax*. How so? *Improbus* originally always has the meaning of *audacious*. Thus Pliny, speaking of the first catalogue of stars made by Hipparchus, calls it — 'labor itiam Deo improbus' — an enterprise audacious even for a superhuman being. Here is the very same word *labor* again qualified by the same epithet. And five hundred other cases might be adduced in which the sense of audacity, and that only, will unlock all, as by a master-key. Salmasius fancied (see his *De Pallio* of Tertullian) that the true idea was the *excessive* or *enormous* — whatever violated the common standards in any mode of disproportion.

able and even laudable to reject, by a second or amended impulse, what the first involuntary impulse would have prompted; and to practise so much disguise as may withdraw from too open notice the natural play of human feelings. By what right does a man display to another, in his very look of alienation and repulsion at his first introduction, that he dislikes him, or that he is doubtful whether he shall like him? Yet this is the too general movement of British sincerity. The play of feelings, the very flux and reflux of contending emotions, passes too nakedly in the very act and process of introduction, under the eyes of the party interested. Frankness is good, honesty is good; but not a frankness, not an honesty which counteracts the very purposes of social meetings — for, unless he comes with the purpose of being pleased, why does a man come at all into meetings, not of business or necessity, but of relaxation and social pleasure?

From Sir H. Davy's conversation, which he carefully turned aside from his professional knowledge, nothing of importance was to be collected; he did not mean that there should. He meant to be a French talker — light, glancing, sparkling; and he was so. Upon the first occasion of my seeing him, I remember that he supported the peculiarly shallow hypothesis, that climate was the great operating cause in determining national differences of all kinds — in the arts as well as in civil institutions. Apparently he did this with *malice prepense*, as a means of exciting Mr. Coleridge to talk, by the provocation of shallowness. But he fought *imparibus armis* against Coleridge: the great boa constrictor could not be roused into unfolding his coils; the monster was lethargic on this evening, as if he had recently swallowed a herd of goats and their horns. The fact was, as I afterwards found, that Coleridge did not like the brilliant manipulator and

lecturer. Coleridge thought him effeminate, and (like many others at that time) ridiculed his lecturing 'in white kid gloves,' and adapting his experiments — that is, his public experiments at the Royal Institution — to the shallow and trivial taste of mere amateurs, who happened to be in powerful stations. Still more, he complained of what he considered Davy's sycophancy and subservience to women of fashion and high rank. Coleridge assured me that Davy was much admired by various women of quality; and so enthusiastically by some, that they would exclaim audibly at the public lecture room — 'Oh, those eyes! those brilliant eyes!' and that the philosopher was weak enough to be pleased with this homage.

Worse even than this, in Coleridge's eyes, was Davy's behavior at fashionable dinner-tables, especially at Lord Darnley's, where the *élite* of the London *savans* and literati at that time congregated. Davy was charged, by many others as well as Coleridge, with too much forgetting the dignity of science in such society, and too openly laying himself out to win favor or applause. 'I could read in Lady Darnley's eyes,' said Coleridge one day, when reporting an instance of Davy's suppleness in accommodating himself to a very great man's theory of *aeroliths* — 'I could read plainly in Lady Darnley's eyes the very words — "I despise this man; this man is degrading himself wilfully."' However, it must be remembered that Sir H. Davy had a much larger and readier introduction into fashionable society than Coleridge. To profess any one intelligible art or accomplishment, and in this one to have obtained an acknowledged or reputed pre-eminence, is a far better passport into privileged society than to have the largest intellectual pretensions of a less determinate class. The very narrowness of a man's claims, by making them definite and appreciable, is

an advantage. Not merely a leader in a branch of art which presupposes a high sense of beauty, a cultivated taste, and other gifts properly intellectual, but even in some art presuming little beyond manual dexterity, is sure of his election into the exclusive circles. Not merely a painter, therefore, but a fiddler, provided only he be the first of his order — nay, I doubt not, a 'chin-chopper' or Jews'-harp player, if only he happen to exceed all other chin-choppers or Jew-harpists — will find himself a privileged man in comparison with the philosopher, or the very largest and amplest intellect that ever nature endowed r education expanded. The advantage lies in doing a thing which has a name, an assignable name; and the narrower is the art, the more appreciable are the degrees of merit in that art.

Now, it is the distinction, the being foremost, the place of *protagonist*, or Coryphœus in an art, which forms the ground of eligibility to that society which is *par excellence distingué*. An actor, therefore, beyond almost any other artist, except only the portrait painter, whose very craft is exercised in the society of its patrons, and cannot (unless partially) be otherwise exercised — an actor, I say, more easily than others, is admitted to graduate in such society, because his rank as an artist is more precisely ascertained by public reputation daily put to the test. Humiliating to any intellectual man, thinking haughtily of those pretensions, and standing upon no other title himself, is the collision which sometimes will befall him in aristocratic houses, with actors even of a low order: for in behalf of such actors, supposing them to have comic talents for drollery, is sometimes suspended the general rule which demands first-rate excellence; fourth or fifth-rate excellence on the stage being very compatible with superiority in convivial talents. Never shall I forget the wrath with

which a London wit, who had indisputable powers of conversation, repeated the circumstances of a professional call, which he made, by appointment, (for he was a lawyer,) upon Young, the tragic actor, who, in the absence of higher powers, then presided on the metropolitan stage: — 'Sir,' said he, in the room where I was left to cool my heels until the great man should find himself disengaged for a person so inconsiderable as myself, there were strewed upon a table, for scenic effect, cards of invitation to dinner parties of grandee lords by the dozen, and to the balls, routes, soirées, and heaven knows what all, of countesses, ambassadresses, and duchesses by the score — ay, and all falling within a few days; more than ever I shall have in my whole life.' Yet this man, who thus complained, was rather a brilliant 'diner-out,' as it is called.

Coleridge, as is notorious, whenever he happened to be in force, or even in artificial spirits, was even more than brilliant; to use a word too often abused and prostituted, he was even magnificent beyond all human standards; and a felicitous conversational specimen from him, was sometimes the most memorable chapter in a man's whole intellectual experience through life. Yet this Coleridge was not in request, was not sought after in the aristocratic circles of London — to their shame be it said! He had just such introductions — such and so many — as would, if turned to account by a pushing, worldly man, have slipped him on sufferance into many more houses of the same distinction. An invitation more or less, costs little to a woman of fashion; and he might have kept his ground, as many admitted *bores* do, upon toleration, in some two or three hundred great privileged mansions. Coleridge, however, had dignity of character sufficient to court no such distinctions; nor would his spirits have been equal to

the expense of labor requisite in so enormous a capital, for a duty so widely dispersed. Neither do I overlook the fact that Mr. Coleridge's peculiar powers were not adapted to parties beyond the scale of a small dinner party. Yet still I contend, that, for the honor of literature, and for the sake of expressing a public homage to the most majestic forms in which the intellect of the age expresses itself, and by way of conciliating the grace and sanction of Scholarship and authentic Philosophy to the circles of rank and wealth, upon the same principle which leads those same circles to court the inferior sanction and grace of Art, even in its lowest walks — for all these reasons, Coleridge should have been courted and wooed into such society.

I am not apt to praise the Continent at the expense of my own country; but here is an instance in which (generally speaking) the continental taste is better than ours. No great meeting is complete in Germany, in France, in Italy, unless the intellect of the land — its scholarship, its philosophy, its literature — be there by deputation: 'the table is not full,' unless these great leading interests are there represented. We inaugurate our wine cups by remembering the King's health; we inaugurate (let it not be thought profane to make such an allusion) our great civil transactions by prayer and remembrance of our highest relations: in reason, then, and by all analogy, we should inaugurate and legitimate, as it were, our meetings of festal pleasure, by the presence of intellectual power and intellectual grace, as the ultimate sources upon which we should all be glad to have it thought that our pleasures depend. Aristocracy of Britain! be not careless of the philosophy and intellect of the age, lest it be thought that your pursuits and taste exist in alienation from both. Dr. Johnson had talked

himself into being so much talked of, that he — had he lived for another generation — would have become indispensable to fashionable parties. Coleridge, who, most assuredly, was far superior in creative power and fertility of new intuitions to Dr. Johnson, and immeasurably superior in the philosophic understanding, (for, in direct philosophic speculation, Dr. Johnson never even attempted anything, except in one little pamphlet against Soame Jenyns,) was scarcely beginning to be heard of amongst the higher circles of England when he died. The reason for comparing him with Dr. Johnson is on account of their common gifts of colloquial power.*

Did I not once hear a friend objecting to me such cases as those of Gibbon? — and, again, 'Wordsworth,' said he — 'him I met at the Marchioness of Salisbury's party, at Canning's, at the English Ambassador's in Paris, and so forth.' True; but Gibbon was a Member of Parliament, and in that capacity, not as a literary man, he had made his connections. Wordsworth, again, was introduced to the great world by Sir George Beaumont, a powerful friend; for he had a large fortune, having no children, and stood midway as a connecting link between the world of art and the world of fashion. Most cases are liable to some personal or casual explanation of this sort, where they seem to be exceptions to the general rule, that commanding intellect is not peculiarly welcome

* Three persons, in all, may be mentioned, from the ranks of intellectual people, who have had a footing in privileged society — I mean, not merely had an admission there, but a known and extensive acceptation. These three were — Lord Byron, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Walter Scott. Now, it is observable that the first was, in some sense, a denizen of such society in right of birth and rank; and, of both the others, it is remarkable that their passes were first countersigned by kings — Dr. Johnson's by George III., Sir Walter's by George IV.

in the most aristocratic circles; or, at least, not in anything like that proportion in which art, nay, the lowest branches of the lowest arts, are welcome; for *these* are absolutely courted. Actors, for seventy or eighty years back at the least, have formed a constituent part of the British aristocratic circles.

Yet it is amusing on this subject to recall the contradictory complaints of different parties according to their different positions. Coleridge told me that Sir Humphry protested that a man had no chance of making himself a very distinguished person in the eyes of London society, unless he were a good House of Commons debater, (and that had a look of truth about it;) or, secondly, unless he had written a treatise on Greek lyric metres. 'Ah, if I could say something now that was pretty and showy on Choriambic metre, or on the *Versus Dochmiaci!*' This was his sneering form of expression. On the other hand, at that very time, Dr. Parr, who could have written ably on some parts of philology, and Middleton, a friend of Coleridge's, and soon after Bishop of Calcutta, who *could* have written Greek lyric metre itself, as well as *on* Greek metre — both were apt to complain of the undue usurpation of chemistry and the kindred researches, over the consecrated studies of our universities. The plain truth was, that great distinction in either way led to all sorts of public honor in England. Mathematics is the sole unprotected and unprivileged branch of knowledge — except what goes under the name of metaphysics, that being absolutely proscribed — not so much without privilege or reward, as without toleration.

Davy was not a favorite with Coleridge; and yet Coleridge, who grasped the whole philosophy of Chemistry perhaps better than any man except Schelling, admired him, and praised him much; and often he went so far

as to say that he might have been a great poet, which perhaps few people will be disposed to think, from the specimens he has left in the Bristol Anthology, (edited in 2 vols., about the year 1799 – 1800, by Mr. Southey.) But, however much he might admire this far-famed man, Coleridge did not at that time seem greatly to respect him. Once or twice he complained a little that Davy had been deficient in proper attentions to himself. In one of the cases alluded to, I suggested, which I believe really to have been the case, that Davy waited for Mr. Coleridge to make the first advances. But this Coleridge would not hear of. No, no, he said — Davy was the superior in social consideration — of *that* there could be no doubt — and to the superior belonged the initiatory act in any steps for proposing the relations on which they were to stand. I do not mean, however, that Coleridge had much, or perhaps any soreness on this point; for he was very forgiving in such cases. But he certainly looked with a disapproving eye on what he viewed at that time as suppleness and want of self-respect in Davy; and he also charged him with sensuality in eating.

I know not whence Coleridge had his information; but he sometimes commented with asperity on Davy's luxuriousness in this particular; and he repeated, as if he knew it on some better authority than that of rumor — what rumor, however, plentifully buzzed about at that time — that Davy would sometimes sit down in solitary epicureanism to dishes which cost him half a guinea each or more. Even if it were so, many epicureans there are, who would cry out, Is *that* all? And whatever faults might be found in Davy at that time, I have reason to believe that time and philosophy did much to raise and strengthen his character in after years; for as to foibles

of physical temperament, a man must settle that account with his own conscience. For others, it is really impertinent to complain. And perhaps the great temperance which Mr. Coleridge, as well as myself, practised through life, may have been due to advantages of organic structure or irritability of palate, as much as to philosophic self-command. At least for myself, I can say that, though very few men indeed have maintained so simple and almost Hindooish a diet, I do not take much merit to myself for my forbearance; and I extend the largest indulgence of charitable construction to all men — except young ones, whose gamut of pleasures is wider — for seeking that irritation from a moderate sensuality, which the flagging pulses of life no longer supply through other modes of excitement. Davy was then supposed to be making a fortune by some manufactory of gunpowder, from which he drew a large share of profit, not for capital contributed, or not for that originally, but for chemical secrets communicated. Soon afterwards, he married a widow with a very large income, (as much as £4000 a year by common report;) was made a baronet; was crowned with the laureateship of science, viz., the President's chair in the London Royal Society; withdrew in consequence from further lecturing in kid gloves of any color; drank moderately, as a man of elegant tastes, of the cup of human enjoyment; throve into a prosperous leader of a circle; sickened; travelled for health, unavailingly for himself, not altogether for others; died; and left a name which, from the necessity of things, must grow fainter in its impression under each revolving sun, but which, at one time, was by much the most resounding name — the most splendid in the estimate of the *laity*, if not of the *clerus* in science — which has arisen since the days of Newton.

Mr. Godwin, of whom the reader will perhaps wish to hear more than of Sir H. Davy, was one of those eminent persons whom, unfortunately, I saw less of than perhaps any other lion of the times. He was in person a little man, with manners peculiarly tranquil, philosophic, and dignified — so at least I thought. I was greatly interested in all that related to this gentleman; not so much, not at all indeed for his novels — which I do not profess to admire: and I am of opinion that, if Mr. Godwin himself had been asked the question searchingly, he would have acknowledged that I had seen a little into his constitution of mind, when I pronounce that of all men who can ever have lived, he, by preference, must have found the labor most irksome of creating incidents, and making the narrative continue to move. Cocytus is not so stagnant or so sluggish in motion as the 'Caleb Williams' in parts, and a later novel, whose name I forget, (but turning upon the case of kidnapping an heir to an English estate, and carrying him to the Continent;) and I would have consented to abide by an appeal to Mr. Godwin himself, whether, to the last extremity of a soil parched up and arid, he had not felt the condition of his own mind when summoned to produce incidents. Is there anything disgraceful in this dearth of incident — this palsy of the fable-creating * faculty? Far from it; *so* far from it, that the powerful minds I have happened to know were certainly those who had least of it. The most powerful mind I have ever known had none of it — positively none. Shakspeare, whom few men would disagree in making

* But I here take an opportunity of observing, that, to produce a fable, (*i. e.*, the outline or frame-work of a *nexus* of incidents,) is not very difficult; the true difficulty is in making the fable move — in calling up the secondary incidents, through which and by which his fable is to revolve

FIRST of human intellects, though double difficulties would arise as to who should be SECOND, and threefold difficulties as to who should be THIRD, and fourfold as to who should be FOURTH: well, Shakspeare had, perhaps, as little of this power as most men, who have had (like him) something of universal minds. Not, therefore, by any possibility, can it be supposed that I mean to disparage Mr. Godwin in charging him with this defect. And yet, in a newspaper, some months ago, I saw the novel of 'Caleb Williams' called '*magnificent*' — a word which, as I have remarked elsewhere, is more than any other abused, from the hotbed excitement of the age; and, previously, by some years, I saw a paper which, in other circumstances, might have moved laughter — a paper which compared and equalized Mr. Godwin, as a novelist, with Sir Walter Scott: but which, because I fancied that I saw in it the filial hand of a gifted writer, whom the whole world, from the east to the west, admires, was fitted by its very extravagance, to draw tears on account of its piety. Involuntarily I thought of a paper which a German wife had written about her ugly husband (Herder), whom all others had admired, but whom she only thought proper to find handsome. But enough of what Mr. Godwin was *not*. I felt the nearest interest in this famous man on three separate accounts: *first*, as the husband of Mrs. Wolstonecraft. — What a woman! the sole rival in this country of the noblest of her sex, Madame Roland — the rival, I mean, in constitution of mind: would that she had glorified her life and end by the same self-sacrifices, which, under favoring circumstances, she was equally able to have done! — Next, I felt a profound interest in Mr. Godwin, as the great *mormo* set up to terrify all England, some forty years ago, by two separate classes of enemies — by the '*panic-of-property*

men,' as Coleridge christened the party who rose in England under the terrors of the French 'war against the palace — peace to the cottage;' and, secondly, by the antagonists of what was then called *French philosophy*, or *Modern philosophy;* or the philosophy of the *Illuminati*.

In two works of great circulation at that time, 'Pilgrim Good Intent,' and Miss Hamilton's novel, 'Modern Philosophers,' the two great moving agents are Dr. Priestley and Mr. Godwin. His connection with Mrs. Wolstonecraft had completed what the first or 4to edition of his 'Political Justice' had begun: the first edition, I say; for, in the second, the hypothesis which alarmed the 'men of property,' (as Mr. Hood has it,) had been emasculated. Such was the awe inspired at that time by these shocks to public opinion, that most people felt of Mr. Godwin with the same alienation and horror as of a ghoul, or a bloodless vampyre, or the monster created by Frankenstein. It may be supposed that I had not shared in these thoughtless impressions; and yet, from the audacity of his speculations, I looked to see a loud, clamorous, and, perhaps, self-sufficient dogmatist; whereas, the qualities most apparent on the surface of his manners were a gentle dignity of self-restraint and a tranquil benignity. I saw him, however, always under a cloud — that is, under the dust and confusion, to the intellect, of a large party, composed of what (by analogy to its slang use) might be termed a mob of literary *sweils*. Once only I saw him in a smaller party, at the *Courier* Office — present, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Charles Lamb, Mr. Stewart, a proprietor of the *Courier*, and some four or five others. But, on this occasion, it happened, which, perhaps, had not often happened before, that neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth talked; Coleridge being more than usually out of spirits;

Wordsworth fatigued by attending a dull debate in the House of Commons; Southey naturally indisposed to the exertions connected with colloquial duties; myself and others repressed by youth and reverence for our company. Thus it fell by accident to Charles Lamb to entertain the company, which he did in his happiest style, as a Diogenes with the heart of a St. John; but nothing, as it happened arose to call out the powers of Mr. Godwin. Though balked, therefore, of all fair occasion for measuring his colloquial calibre, I was not sorry to have gone off with an amended impression of the demeanor and general bearing to be naturally expected from revolutionary minds, and a personal redress given to the common partisan portrait circulated of one who had filled the mouth of declaimers for many a year, and become a byword or a commonplace of rhetoric for the schools.

In 1808, going up to London from Oxford, about May or June, in order to attend the marriage of a college friend, I met a lady of great conversational spirit — a Scottish lady, who, with her daughter, were the lions for that particular season in the higher circles of London; the mother for her wit, the daughter for her beauty. This was Mrs. Grant,[1] of Laggan — a valley or parish in the Scottish Highlands. The interest about her had been evoked for this particular winter of London by the quality of her introductions, and stimulated by the beauty of the daughter. But the permanent ground of it lay in her books; which, however, were thought below her conversation. Her visit was chiefly to the Bishop of London, whose palace she had just left at the time I met her, in order to fulfil some engagement to a city friend — the wife of a rich stockbroker; and there it was I had the honor of being presented to her. Her kindness to me was particularly flattering; and, to this day, I retain the

impression of the benignity which she — an established wit, and just then receiving incense from all quarters — showed in her manners to me — a person utterly unknown. Once, however, she gave a rough assault to my deepest sensibilities. Either from myself or from somebody else, she had learned my profound veneration for the poetry of Wordsworth. Upon this, she suddenly put a question to me upon the lines of Wordsworth, on seeing a robin redbreast pursuing a butterfly. The particular passage which she selected was to this effect: —

> 'If Father Adam could open his eyes,
> And see but this sight beneath the skies,
> He would wish to close them again.'

Now,' said Mrs. Grant, 'what possible relation can Father Adam have to this case of the bird and the butterfly?' It must be mentioned here, that the poem was not in the 'Lyrical Ballads,' by which originally Wordsworth had become known, but in a second collection which had but just issued from the press. The volumes had been in the public hands, if they could be said to have reached the public at all in those years, for about a fortnight; but in mine, who had only recently arrived in London, not above two days. Consequently, I had not seen the poem; and being quite taken aback by such a question, in a dinner party made up of people who had either not heard of Wordsworth, or heard of him only as an extravagant and feeble innovator, I believe that I made some absurd answer about Adam being possibly taken as a representative man, or representing the general sensibilities of human nature. Anything passes in company for a reason or an explanation, when people have not the demoniac passion for disputation; and Mrs. Grant accordingly bowed, in sign of acquiescence. I easily judged, how-

ever, that she could not have been satisfied; and in going home, with a strong feeling of self-reproach for having but ill sustained a poetic reputation for which I was so intensely jealous, I set myself to consider what *could* be the meaning for this connection of Father Adam with the case; and, without having read the poem, by the light of so much as Mrs. Grant had quoted, instantly it flashed upon me that the secret reference must be to that passage in the 'Paradise Lost,' where Adam is represented — on the very next morning after his fatal transgression, and whilst yet in suspense as to the shape in which the dread consequences would begin to reveal themselves, and how soon begin — as lifting up his eyes, and seeing the first sad proof that all flesh was tainted, and that corruption had already travelled, by mysterious sympathy, through universal nature. The passage is most memorable, and can never be forgotten by one who has thoughtfully read it: —

> 'The bird of Jove stoop'd from his airy flight,
> Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;
> Down from the hills, the beast that reigns in woods —
> First hunter then — pursued a gentle brace,
> Goodliest of all the forest — hart and hind.
> *Adam observed*' ——

Here, then, we find, that in Milton's representation of the Fall, the very earliest — not the second or third, but positively the very first — outward signs by which Adam was made aware of a secret but awful revolution, which had gone like a whisper through all nature, was this very phenomenon of two animals pursuing in wrath others of more innocent and beautiful appearance. Reasonably therefore, we may imagine, for the purposes of a poet, that if Adam were permitted to open his eyes again upon this earthly scene of things, it would send a peculiar

anguish through his thoughts to see renewed before him that very same image and manifestation of ruin by which his eyes had been met and his suspense had been resolved on the very first morning succeeding to his fall. The only question which could arise after this upon the propriety of Mr. Wordsworth's allusion, was, Had he a right to presume in his readers such a knowledge of Milton? The answer to which is — that Milton is as much a presumable or presupposable book in the reference of a poet, as nature herself and the common phenomena of nature. These a poet postulates, or presupposes in his reader, and is entitled to do so. However, I mentioned the case afterwards to Mr. Wordsworth; and, in consequence of what I then said, he added the note of reference to Milton, which will be found in the subsequent editions. Another, and hardly, perhaps, so excusable a mistake, had been made upon the very same poem by *The Edinburgh Review*. Mr. Wordsworth had noticed the household character of the red-breast and his consecration to the feelings of men in all Christian countries; and this he had expressed by calling it

> 'The bird, whom by some name or other,
> All men who know thee *call their brother*'—

which passage the Reviewer had so little understood as to direct attention to it by italics. Yet the explanation was found in what immediately followed: —

> 'Their Thomas in Finland
> And Russia far inland;
> The Peter of Norway boors.'

The bird is Robin with us in Britain, Thomas in another land, Peter in another, and so on. This was the explanation of what the Reviewer thought so absurd or inexplicable. To call a bird by a christian name *is*, in effect,

when expressed by a poet, to 'call him a brother' of man. And with equal ease might all the passages be explained which have hitherto been stumbling-blocks to critics, where at least the objection has arisen out of misconstruction of the sense.

Some years after this, I saw Mrs. Grant again in Edinburgh; but grief was then heavy upon her: the fair-haired young lady, the 'Scottish Beauty' of the London circles in 1808, had gone to an early grave; and others of her family were expected to follow. Her 'Letters from the Mountains' made a considerable impression at the time of its first appearance. But the work which interested me the most was that in which she painted her own early years as passed among the Anglo-Dutch of the New England States. It was a condition of society which had thus much of a paradisiacal condition — that none was 'afore or after the other;' no jealous precedencies; no suspicions; no spectacles of grinding poverty. Aristocracy, there was none; pauperism, there was none; and every member of the community saw a friend and a well-wisher in every other. Happy, happy state, in which were to be found

'No fears to beat away, no strife to heal;'

a state which, with the expansion of civilization as it travels through American forests, may, for a century to come, be continually renewed in those lands, but elsewhere I fear never more in this world.

I have been anticipating a little, and looking forward into years which I have not yet regularly reached. It may surprise a reader who has gone through the slight records of my life, to find me originally as a boy, moving amongst the circles of the nobility, and now courting only those of intellectual people. The final resolution which

led me into renouncing my connections with ranks above my own, arose upon the following occasion. On leaving school clandestinely, which I did some weeks before my seventeenth birthday, I went into Wales; where I continued for months to walk about. As long as I kept up any negotiation with my guardians, I received a regular allowance of a guinea a week. But upon this sum, not, however, (as may be supposed,) without great difficulty, I continued to obtain a bed, and some apology for supper, in the shape of coffee or tea, at the inns scattered about the Welsh valleys for the sake of the tourist. The old village inns had, till lately, charged the most primitive prices — sixpence, for example, had been the usual rate for a dinner, and so on; but all this had very nearly disappeared under the great revolution of the times. War prices had arisen in the great markets; a great influx of tourists and artists had begun to set in to the Welsh valleys; elegant hotels arose on every side; and the prices were pretty much as on the Bath road. Finding, therefore, that my three shillings a day did but little at these showy inns, more than the better half being at once exhausted upon a bed and the perquisites to 'waiter,' 'chambermaid,' and 'boots,' I came to the resolution of carrying a tent with me and sleeping out of doors. This tent, as may be imagined, was miserably small; both to make it more portable, and also on account of the tent-pole, which, to avoid notice and trouble, was no more than a common walking-cane. I pitched my tent always on the lee-side of a hill; and, in a land so solitary, and free from 'high-viced' towns, I apprehended but little from any enemies, except the wild mountain cattle: these sometimes used to take umbrage at my intrusion, and advance upon my encampment in the darkness, with what intentions I could not discover, nor perhaps did they

know; but I lay in constant anxiety that some lumbering cow or other should break into my preserve, and poach her heavy foot into my face. This, however, was not the worst evil. I soon found the truth of Napoleon's criticism at St. Helena, on a proposal made for improving the art of war by portable tents, treble-barrelled guns, &c. — that the practice of *bivouacking*, which offended so deeply the humanity of some philanthropic people, was in fact most favorable to the health of troops; and that at most, a screen hung up to windward was the utmost protection from open air, (or properly from the weather, rather than the air,) which is consistent with health. The loftier tents of the officers may be an exception; but mine, which resembled more the humbler and crowded tents of the privates, confirmed strikingly the medical objection of Napoleon. I soon found it necessary to resign it in that form; using it rather as a screen against wind, or, on a calm night, as a pillow. Selecting the ground well on such occasions, I found the advantage of this *sub dio* sleeping, in improved health; but summer air and dry ground disappearing, I was at length obliged to seek other modes of lodging.

One morning, however, during the season when I practised it, I was sitting as yet undecided upon my day's movements, when a sound of wheels, as if rapidly approaching my own station, became audible. I rose and went forwards in the direction of the sound, with as much surprise as if 'Gabriel's hounds' had been really approaching; for my idea was, that I had taken up my sleeping quarters on a wild moor remote from roads. A little ascent, and the turning of a knoll, showed me that in part I was right: a wild moor it was, but one which was traversed by the high road between Kerniogge and Llanrwst. A travelling carriage was advancing, and

swept past me at the very moment when I touched the high road. The carriage seemed known to me; and on the panels I observed the coronet of a marquis; and, immediately after, I saw a head put out of the window, and looking at me until the downhill track and abrupt turns of the road hid me from sight. It was a natural conclusion enough, this being the high road to Holyhead, that the carriage I had just seen might be that of my Irish friend, who had been created a marquis soon after I left Ireland; and the face of the person who surveyed me so keenly, doubtless one of his household, knowing me better than I knew her. Great was my joy at this probability; and without delay, I struck my tent and walked to Llanrwst. The distance proved to be six miles; and on my arrival the bird was flown. I went into the stable-yard, and inquired earnestly of a group just fresh from attending to the horses recently come in — 'Who was the last traveller?' All remembered that it was a lord, and that it was a marquis. 'Was it the Marquis of S——?' 'Yes: that was the very title,' several voices answered; 'and he would stop for dinner at Conway.' Thither I resolved to pursue; and, for that purpose, went into the house. Luckily, the landlord was able to inform me that the noble marquis was not my friend, but Lord Bath. And, by this timely information, I was saved from the very awkward embarrassment of finding myself at Conway with a chaise and four to pay, and no money at my command. The momentary evil was past. But the sort of danger I had escaped, of finding myself viewed by the inn at Conway as a fraudulent tourist, threw me powerfully on considering what had been my motive for pursuing the party, supposing even that it *had* been Lord S——. What would have come of it? He would naturally have been pleased to see me, as everybody is

pleased to see old friends after a long interval; he would have asked me to dine with him; and, supposing a vacant seat in his carriage, he would have asked me to go along with him to Holyhead or Dublin. But even so, he would not have particularly admired my call on his purse for a chaise and four. Next I went on to ask myself — What if all this were conceded, and it should happen that he really *was* pleased, and wishing for my company to Dublin — upon what principles or views did I mean to cultivate a connection of this sort? Boyish years stood upon other grounds; but, on coming to an accountable age, I knew that everywhere sprung up an impertinent question as to a young man's future destination. Up to sixteen or fifteen, a boy is ranked upon the footing of his father's rank. After that time, his rank is deduced *proleptically* from the probable stations which he will hold in future times.

Now, if my object was to make myself a trading Member of Parliament, certainly the connections which I had with ministerial noblemen would be of use. Through them, a borough might be had; and, that obtained, all was done for a man which he could owe to fortune — the rest depended upon himself. But, supposing that *personally* there should be no objections, still I had seen enough of borough-disposers to know that they were not willing to give, without a consideration, something more than that of support to a particular line of politics. Lord S—— in particular, who in those days had some borough interest, looked upon it as 'bespoke' for family connections. And so of others. But the most signal bar to all this was, my own grievous disinclination to any mode of public, or noisy, or contentious life. Peace, liberty to think, solitude — these were the cravings of my heart. And unless I went among the nobility in the character of a demanding,

insolent claimant, I knew that I had better not go at all. Inevitably the question arises — Upon what footing is this man here? Is it his natural station? No: then at least he is an interloper; and the chances are, that he is a toad-eater and sycophant. Suppose he is *not* — yet the known presumption that he is (a presumption of which he cannot be unaware) loads him with almost the worst reproaches of the reality. He is no sycophant; yet he is willing to stand the presumption that he is, and the consequent contempt —— For what? Every way, I saw that my own dignity, which above all things a man should scrupulously maintain, required that I should no longer go into any circles where I did not stand on my own native footing — *proprio jure*. Many a time had I wondered at the false conceptions of dignity which could lead Addison to think himself elevated by marriage with Lady Warwick — a husband to seek protection, as it were, from a wife! What had been abundantly right for me as a boy, ceased to be right for me when I ceased to be a boy.

CHAPTER III.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES LAMB.

Amongst the earliest literary acquaintances I made was that with the inimitable Charles Lamb: inimitable, I say, but the word is too limited in its meaning; for, as is said of Milton in that well-known life of him attached to all common editions of the 'Paradise Lost,' (Fenton's, I think,) 'in both senses he was above imitation.' Yes; it was as impossible to the moral nature of Charles Lamb that he should imitate another, as, in an intellectual sense, it was impossible that any other should successfully imitate him. To write with patience even, not to say genially, for Charles Lamb it was a very necessity of his constitution that he should write from his own wayward nature; and that nature was so peculiar that no other man, the ablest at mimicry, could counterfeit its voice. But let me not anticipate; for these were opinions about Lamb which I had not when I first knew him, nor could have had by any reasonable title. 'Elia,' be it observed, the exquisite 'Elia,' was then unborn; Lamb had as yet published nothing to the world which proclaimed him in his proper character of a most original man of genius: *

* '*Man of genius*' — '*man of talent.*' I have, in another place, laid down what I conceive to be the true ground of distinction between *genius* and *talent*; which lies mainly in this — that genius is intellectual power impregnated with the *moral* nature, and expresses

at best, he could have been thought no more than a man of talent — and of talent moving in a narrow path, with a power rather of mimicking the quaint and the fantastic, than any large grasp over catholic beauty. And, therefore, it need not offend the most doting admirer of Lamb as he is *now* known to us, a brilliant star for ever fixed in the firmament of English literature, that I acknowledge myself to have sought his acquaintance rather under the reflex honor he had enjoyed of being known as Coleridge's friend, than for any which he yet held directly and separately in his own person. My earliest advances towards this acquaintance had an inauspicious aspect; and it may be worth while reporting the circumstances, for they were characteristic of Charles Lamb; and the immediate result was — that we parted, not perhaps (as Lamb says of his philosophic friend R. and the Parisians) 'with mutual contempt,' but at least with coolness; and on my part, with something that might have even turned to disgust — founded, however, entirely on my utter misapprehension of Lamb's character and his manners — had it not been for the winning goodness of Miss Lamb, before which all resentment must have melted in a moment.

a synthesis of the active in man with his original organic capacity of pleasure and pain. Hence the very word *genius*, because the *genial* nature in its whole organization is expressed and involved in it. Hence, also, arises the reason that genius is always peculiar and individual; one man's genius never exactly repeats another man's. But talent is the same in all men; and that which is effected by talent, can never serve to identify or indicate its author. Hence, too, that, although talent is the object of respect, it never conciliates love; you love a man of talent perhaps *in concreto*, but not talent, whereas genius, even for itself, is idolized. I am the more proud of this distinction, since I have seen the utter failure of Mr. Coleridge, judging from his attempt in his 'Table Talk.'

It was either late in 1804 or early in 1805, according to my present computations, that I had obtained from a literary friend a letter of introduction to Mr. Lamb. All that I knew of his works was his play of 'John Woodvil,' which I had bought in Oxford, and perhaps I only had bought throughout that great University, at the time of my matriculation there, about the Christmas of 1803. Another book fell into my hands on that same morning, I recollect — the 'Gebir' of Mr. Walter Savage Landor — which astonished me by the splendor of its descriptions (for I had opened accidentally upon the sea-nymph's marriage with Tamor, the youthful brother of Gebir) — and I bought this also. Afterwards, when placing these two most unpopular of books on the same shelf with the other far holier idols of my heart, the joint poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge as then associated in the 'Lyrical Ballads' — poems not equally unknown, perhaps a *little* better known, but only with the result of being more openly scorned, rejected — I could not but smile internally at the fair prospect I had of congregating a library which no man had read but myself. 'John Woodvil' I had almost studied, and Miss Lamb's pretty 'High-Born Helen,' and the ingenious imitations of Burton; these I had read, and, to a certain degree, must have admired, for some parts of them had settled without effort in my memory. I had read also the *Edinburgh* notice of them; and with what contempt may be supposed from the fact, that my veneration for Wordsworth transcended all that I felt for any created being, past or present; insomuch that, in the summer, or spring rather, of that same year, and full eight months before I first went to Oxford, I had ventured to address a letter to him, through his publishers the Messrs. Longman, (which letter, Miss Wordsworth in after years assured me they believed to be the production

of some person much older than I represented myself,) and that in due time I had been honored by a long answer from Wordsworth; an honor which, I well remember, kept me awake, from mere excess of pleasure, through a long night in June, 1803. It was not to be supposed that the very feeblest of admirations could be shaken by mere scorn and contumely, unsupported by any shadow of a reason. Wordsworth, therefore, could not have suffered in any man's opinion, from the puny efforts of this new autocrat amongst reviews; but what was said of Lamb, though not containing one iota of criticism, either good or bad, had certainly more point and cleverness. The supposition that 'John Woodvil' might be a lost drama, recovered from the age of Thespis, and entitled to the hircus, &c., must, I should think, have won a smile from Lamb himself; or why say 'Lamb himself,' which means '*even* Lamb,' when he would have been the *very* first to laugh, (as he was afterwards among the first to hoot at his own farce,) provided only he could detach his mind from the ill-nature and hard contempt which accompanied the wit. This wit had certainly not dazzled my eyes in the slightest degree. So far as I was left at leisure, by a more potent order of poetry, to think of the 'John Woodvil' at all, I had felt and acknowledged a delicacy and tenderness in the situations as well as the sentiments, but disfigured, as I thought, by quaint, grotesque, and *mimetic* phraseology. The main defect, however, of which I complained, was defect of power. I thought Lamb had no right to take his station amongst the inspired writers who had just then risen, to throw new blood into our literature, and to breathe a breath of life through the worn-out, or, at least, torpid organization of the national mind. He belonged, I thought, to the old literature; and, as a poet, he certainly does. There were

in his verses minute scintillations of genius — now and then, even a subtle sense of beauty; and there were shy graces, lurking half-unseen, like violets in the shade. But there was no power on a colossal scale; no breadth; no choice of great subjects; no wrestling with difficulty; no creative energy. So I thought then; and so I should think now, if Lamb were viewed chiefly as a poet. Since those days, he has established his right to a seat in any company. But why? and in what character? As 'Elia:' — the essays of 'Elia' are as exquisite a gem amongst the jewellery of literature, as any nation can show. They do not, indeed, suggest to the typifying imagination, a Last Supper of Da Vinci, or a Group from the Sistine Chapel; but they suggest some exquisite cabinet painting; such, for instance, as that Carlo Dolce known to all who have visited Lord Exeter's place of Burleigh; (by the way, I bar the allusion to *Charles* Lamb, which a shameless punster suggests in the name *Carlo Dolce;*) and in this also resembling that famous picture — that many critics (Hazlitt amongst others) can see little or nothing in it. *Quam nihil ad genium, Papiniane, tuum!* Those, therefore, err in my opinion, who present Lamb to our notice amongst the poets. Very pretty, very elegant, very tender, very beautiful verses he has written; nay, twice he has written verses of extraordinary force, almost demoniac force — viz., 'The Three Graves,' and 'The Gipsy's Malison.' But, speaking generally, he writes verses as one to whom that function was a secondary and occasional function; not his original and natural vocation; not an ἔργον, but a πάρεργον.

For the reasons, therefore, I have given, never thinking of Charles Lamb as a poet, and, at that time, having no means for judging of him in any other character, I had requested the letter of introduction to him, rather with a

view to some further knowledge of Coleridge, (who was then absent from England,) than from any special interest about Lamb himself. However, I felt the extreme discourtesy of approaching a man, and asking for his time and civility under such an avowal: and the letter, therefore, as I believe, or as I requested, represented me in the light of an admirer. I hope it did; for that character might have some excuse for what followed, and heal the unpleasant impression likely to be left by a sort of *fracas* which occurred at my first meeting with Lamb. This was so characteristic of Lamb, that I have often laughed at it since I came to know what *was* characteristic of Lamb. But first let me describe my brief introductory call upon him at the India House. I had been told that he was never to be found at home except in the evenings; and to have called then would have been, in a manner, forcing myself upon his hospitalities, and at a moment when he might have confidential friends about him; besides that, he was sometimes tempted away to the theatres. I went, therefore, to the India House; made inquiries amongst the servants; and, after some trouble, (for *that* was early in his Leadenhall Street career, and possibly, he was not much known,) I was shown into a small room, or else a small section of a large one, (thirty-four years affects one's remembrance of some circumstances,) in which was a very lofty writing-desk, separated by a still higher railing from that part of the floor on which the profane — the laity, like myself — were allowed to approach the *clerus*, or clerkly rulers of the room. Within the railing, sat, to the best of my remembrance, six quill-driving gentlemen; not gentlemen whose duty or profession it was merely to drive the quill, but who were then driving it — *gens de plume*, such *in esse*, as well as *in posse* — in act as well as habit; for, as if they

supposed me a spy, sent by some superior power, to report upon the situation of affairs as surprised by me, they were all too profoundly immersed in their oriental studies to have any sense of my presence. Consequently, I was reduced to a necessity of announcing myself and my errand. I walked, therefore, into one of the two open doorways of the railing, and stood closely by the high stool of him who occupied the first place within the little aisle. I touched his arm, by way of recalling him from his lofty Leadenhall speculations to this sublunary world; and, presenting my letter, asked if that gentleman (pointing to the address) were really a citizen of the present room; for I had been repeatedly misled, by the directions given me, into wrong rooms. The gentleman smiled; it was a smile not to be forgotten. This was Lamb. And here occurred a *very*, *very* little incident — one of those which pass so fugitively that they are gone and hurrying away into Lethe almost before your attention can have arrested them; but it was an incident which, to me, who happened to notice it, served to express the courtesy and delicate consideration of Lamb's manners. The seat upon which he sat, was a very high one; so absurdly high, by the way, that I can imagine no possible use or sense in such an altitude, unless it were to restrain the occupant from playing truant at the fire, by opposing Alpine difficulties to his descent.

Whatever might be the original purpose of this aspiring seat, one serious dilemma arose from it, and this it was which gave the occasion to Lamb's act of courtesy. Somewhere there is an anecdote, meant to illustrate the ultra-obsequiousness of the man: either I have heard of it in connection with some actual man known to myself, or it is told in a book of some historical coxcomb — that being on horseback, and meeting some person or other

whom it seemed advisable to flatter, he actually dismounted, in order to pay his court by a more ceremonious bow. In Russia, as we all know, this was, at one time, upon meeting any of the Imperial family, an act of legal necessity: and there, accordingly, but there only, it would have worn no ludicrous aspect. Now, in this situation of Lamb's, the act of descending from his throne, a very elaborate process, with steps and stages analogous to those on horseback — of slipping your right foot out of the stirrup, throwing your leg over the crupper, &c. — was, to all intents and purposes, the same thing as dismounting from a great elephant of a horse. Therefore it both was, and was felt to be by Lamb, supremely ludicrous. On the other hand, to have sate still and stately upon this aerial station, to have bowed condescendingly from this altitude, would have been — not ludicrous indeed; performed by a very superb person, and supported by a very superb bow, it might have been vastly fine, and even terrifying to many young gentlemen under sixteen; but it would have had an air of ungentlemanly assumption. Between these extremes, therefore, Lamb had to choose: — between appearing ridiculous himself for a moment, by going through a ridiculous evolution, which no man could execute with grace; or, on the other hand, appearing lofty and assuming, in a degree which his truly humble nature (for he was the humblest of men in the pretensions which he put forward for himself) must have shrunk from with horror. Nobody who knew Lamb can doubt how the problem was solved; he began to dismount instantly; and, as it happened that the very first *round* of his descent obliged him to turn his back upon me as if for a sudden purpose of flight, he had an excuse for laughing; which he did heartily — saying, at the same time, something to this effect, that I must not

judge from first appearances; that he should revolve upon me; that he was not going to fly; and other facetiæ, which challenged a general laugh from the clerical brotherhood.

When he had reached the basis of terra firma on which I was standing, naturally, as a mode of thanking him for his courtesy, I presented my hand; which, in a general case, I should certainly not have done; for I cherished, in an ultra-English degree, the English custom (a wise custom) of bowing in frigid silence on a first introduction to a stranger; but, to a man of literary talent, and one who had just practised so much kindness in my favor at so probable a hazard to himself of being laughed at for his pains, I could not maintain that frosty reserve. Lamb took my hand; did not absolutely reject it: but rather repelled my advance by his manner. This, however, long afterwards I found, was only a habit derived from his too great sensitiveness to the variety of people's feelings, which run through a gamut so infinite of degrees and modes as to make it unsafe for any man who respects himself, to be too hasty in his allowances of familiarity. Lamb had, as he was entitled to have, a high self-respect; and me he probably suspected (as a young Oxonian) of some aristocratic tendencies. The letter of introduction, containing (I imagine) no matters of business, was speedily run through; and I instantly received an invitation to spend the evening with him. Lamb was not one of those who catch at the chance of escaping from a bore by fixing some distant day, when accidents (in duplicate proportion, perhaps, to the number of intervening days) may have carried you away from the place: he sought to benefit by no luck of that kind; for he was, with his limited income — and I say it deliberately — positively the most hospitable man I have known in this world.

That night, the same night, I was to come and spend the evening with him. I had gone to the India House with the express purpose of accepting whatever invitation he should give me; and, therefore, I accepted this, took my leave, and left Lamb in the act of resuming his aerial position.

I was to come so early as to drink tea with Lamb; and the hour was seven. He lived in the Temple; and I, who was not then, as afterwards I became, a student and member of 'the Honorable Society of the Middle Temple,' did not know much of the localities. However, I found out his abode, not greatly beyond my time: nobody had been asked to meet me, which a little surprised me, but I was glad of it; for, besides Lamb, there was present, his sister, Miss Lamb, of whom, and whose talents and sweetness of disposition, I had heard. I turned the conversation, upon the first opening which offered, to the subject of Coleridge; and many of my questions were answered satisfactorily, because seriously, by Miss Lamb. But Lamb took a pleasure in baffling me, or in throwing ridicule upon the subject. Out of this grew the matter of our affray. We were speaking of 'The Ancient Mariner.' Now to explain what followed, and a little to excuse myself, I must beg the reader to understand that I was under twenty years of age, and that my admiration for Coleridge (as in, perhaps, a still greater degree, for Wordsworth) was literally in no respect short of a religious feeling: it had, indeed, all the sanctity of religion, and all the tenderness of a human veneration. Then, also, to imagine the strength which it would derive from circumstances that do not exist now, but did then, let the reader further suppose a case — not such as he may have known since that era about Sir Walter Scotts and Lord Byrons, where every

man you could possibly fall foul of, early or late, night or day, summer or winter, was in perfect readiness to feel and express his sympathy with the admirer — but when no man, beyond one or two in each ten thousand, had so much as heard of either Coleridge or Wordsworth; and that one, or those two, knew them only to scorn them — trample on them — spit upon them: men so abject in public estimation, I maintain, as that Coleridge and that Wordsworth, had not existed before — have not existed since — will not exist again. We have heard in old times, of donkeys insulting effete or dying lions, by kicking them; but in the case of Coleridge and Wordsworth it was effete donkeys that kicked living lions. They, Coleridge and Wordsworth, were the Pariahs of literature in those days: as much scorned wherever they were known; but escaping that scorn only because they were as little known as Pariahs, and even more obscure.

Well, after this bravura, by way of conveying my sense of the real position then occupied by these two authors — a position which thirty and odd years have altered, by a revolution more astonishing and total than ever before happened in literature or in life — let the reader figure to himself the sensitive horror with which a young person, carrying his devotion about with him, of necessity, as the profoundest of secrets, like a primitive Christian amongst a nation of Pagans, or a Roman Catholic convert amongst the bloody idolaters of Japan — in Oxford, above all places, hoping for no sympathy, and feeling a daily grief, almost a shame, in harboring this devotion to that which, nevertheless, had done more for the expansion and sustenance of his own inner mind than all literature besides — let the reader figure, I say, to himself, the shock with which such a person must recoil from hearing the very friend and associate of these

authors utter what seemed at that time a burning ridicule of all which belonged to them — their books, their thoughts, their places, their persons. This had gone on for some time, before we came upon the ground of 'The Ancient Mariner;' I had been grieved, perplexed, astonished; and how else could I have felt reasonably, knowing nothing of Lamb's propensity to mystify a stranger; he, on the other hand, knowing nothing of the depth of my feelings on these subjects, and that they were not so much mere literary preferences as something that went deeper than life or household affections? At length, when he had given utterance to some ferocious canon of judgment, which seemed to question the entire value of the poem, I said, perspiring, (I dare say,) in this detestable crisis — 'But, Mr. Lamb, good heavens! how is it possible you can allow yourself in such opinions? What instance could you bring from the poem that would bear you out in these insinuations?' 'Instances!' said Lamb: 'oh, I'll instance you, if you come to that. Instance, indeed! Pray, what do you say to this —

> "The many men so beautiful,
> And they all dead did lie?"

So beautiful, indeed! Beautiful! Just think of such a gang of Wapping vagabonds, all covered with pitch, and chewing tobacco; and the old gentleman himself — what do you call him? — the bright-eyed fellow?' What more might follow, I never heard; for, at this point, in a perfect rapture of horror, I raised my hands — both hands — to both ears; and, without stopping to think or to apologize, I endeavored to restore equanimity to my disturbed sensibilities, by shutting out all further knowledge of Lamb's impieties. At length he seemed to have finished; so I, on my part, thought I might venture to

take off the embargo: and in fact he *had* ceased; but no sooner did he find me restored to my hearing than he said with a most sarcastic smile — which he could assume upon occasion — 'If you please, sir, we'll say grace before we begin.' I know not whether Lamb were really piqued or not at the mode by which I had expressed my disturbance: Miss Lamb certainly was not; her goodness led her to pardon me, and to treat me — in whatever light she might really view my almost involuntary rudeness — as the party who had suffered wrong; and, for the rest of the evening, she was so pointedly kind and conciliatory in her manner, that I felt greatly ashamed of my boyish failure in self-command. Yet, after all, Lamb necessarily appeared so much worse, in my eyes, as a traitor is worse than an open enemy.

Lamb, after this one visit — not knowing at that time any particular reason for continuing to seek his acquaintance — I did not trouble with my calls for some years. At length, however, about the year 1808, and for the six or seven following years, in my evening visits to Coleridge, I used to meet him again; not often, but sufficiently to correct altogether the very false impression I had received of his character and manners. I have elsewhere described him as a 'Diogenes with the heart of a St. John' — where, by the way, the reader must not, by laying the accent falsely on St. John, convert it into the name of Lord Bolingbroke: I meant St. John the Evangelist. And by ascribing to Lamb any sort of resemblance to Diogenes, I had a view only to his plain speaking in the first place — his unequalled freedom from every mode of hypocrisy or affectation; and, secondly, to his talent for saying keen, pointed things, sudden flashes, or revelations of hidden truths, in a short condensed form of words. In fact, the very foundation of

Lamb's peculiar character was laid in his absolute abhorrence of all affectation. This showed itself in self-disparagement of every kind; never the mock disparagement, which is self-praise in an indirect form, as when people accuse themselves of all the virtues, by professing an inability to pay proper attention to prudence or economy — or uncontrollable disposition to be rash and inconsiderate on behalf of a weaker party when suffering apparent wrong. But Lamb's confessions of error, of infirmity, were never at any time acts of mock humility, meant to involve oblique compliment in the rebound. Thus, he honestly and frankly confessed his blank insensibility to music.

> 'King David's harp, that made the madness flee
> From Saul, had been but a Jew's harp to me,'

is his plain, unvarnished admission, in verses admirable for their wit and their elegance: nor did he attempt to break the force of this unfortunate truth, by claiming, which, perhaps, he might have claimed, a compensatory superiority in the endowments of his eye. It happened to him, as I believe it has often done to others — to Pope, perhaps, but certainly to Wordsworth — that the imperfect structure or imperfect development of the ear, denying any profound sensibility to the highest modes of impassioned music, has been balanced by a more than usual sensibility to some modes of visual beauty.

With respect to Wordsworth, it has been doubted, by some of his friends, upon very good grounds, whether, as a connoisseur in painting, he has a very learned eye, or one that can be relied upon. I hold it to be very doubtful, also, whether Wordsworth's judgment in the human face — its features and its expression — be altogether sound, and in conformity to the highest standards of art.

But it is undeniable — and must be most familiar to all who have associated upon intimate terms with Wordsworth and his sister — that they both derive a pleasure, originally and organically more profound than is often witnessed, both from the forms and the coloring of rural nature. The very same tests by which I recognize my own sensibility to music, as rising above the common standard — viz., by the indispensableness of it to my daily comfort: the readiness with which I make any sacrifices to obtain a 'grand debauch' of this nature, &c. &c. — these, when applied to Wordsworth, manifest him to have an analogous craving, in a degree much transcending the general ratio for the luxuries of the eye. These luxuries Wordsworth seeks in their great original exemplar — in Nature as exhibiting herself amongst the bold forms and the rich but harmonious coloring of mountainous scenery; there especially, where the hand of injudicious art, or of mercenary craft, has not much interfered, with monotonous repetition of unmeaning forms with offensive outlines, or, still more, with harsh and glaring contrasts of color. The offence which strikes upon Wordsworth's eye from such disfigurations of nature is, really and without affectation, as keen, as intense, and as inevitable as to other men the pain to the mere physical eye-sight from the glare of snow or the irritations of flying dust. Lamb, on the other hand, sought his pleasures of this class — not, as by this time all the world knows, in external nature, for which it was his pleasure to profess, not merely an indifference, but even a horror which it delighted him to exaggerate with a kind of playful malice to those whom he was hoaxing — but in the works of the great painters: and for these I have good reason to think that both he and his sister had a peculiarly deep sensibility, and, after long practice, a fine and matured taste. Here, then, was both

a gift and an attainment which Lamb might have fairly pleaded in the way of a set-off to his acknowledged defects of ear. But Lamb was too really and sincerely humble ever to think of nursing and tending his own character in any man's estimation, or of attempting to blunt the effect of his own honest avowals of imperfection, by dexterously playing off before your eyes some counterbalancing accomplishment. He was, in fact, as I have said before, the most humble and unpretending of human beings, the most thoroughly sincere, the most impatient of either simulation or dissimulation, and the one who threw himself the most unreservedly for your good opinion upon the plain natural expression of his real qualities, as nature had forced them, without artifice, or design, or disguise, more than you find in the most childlike of children.

There was a notion prevalent about Lamb, which I can affirm to have been a most erroneous one: it was — that any flagrant act of wickedness formed a recommendation to his favor. 'Ah!' said one man to me, when asking a letter of introduction from him — 'ah! that I could but recommend you as a man that had robbed the mail, or the King's exchequer — which would be better. In that case, I need not add a word; you would take rank instantly amongst the privileged friends of Lamb, without a word from me.' Now, as to '*the King's Exchequer*,' I cannot say. A man who should have placed himself in relation with Falstaff, by obeying his commands* at a distance of four centuries, (like the traveller, who demanded of the turnpikeman — 'How do you like your eggs dressed?' and, ten years after, on passing the same gate, received the monosyllabic reply — *poached*) — that man might

* 'Rob me thy father's exchequer.' — *Falstaff, in Henry IV., Part 1st.*

have presented irresistible claims to Lamb's affection. Shakspeare, or anything connected with Shakspeare, might have proved too much for his Roman virtue. But, putting aside any case so impossible as this, I can affirm that — so far from this being the truth, or approaching the truth — a rule the very opposite governed Lamb's conduct: — so far from welcoming wicked, profligate, or dissolute people by preference, if they happened to be clever — he bore with numerous dull people, stupid people, asinine people, for no other reason upon earth than because he knew them, or believed them to have been ill-used or oppressed by some clever but dissolute man. That was enough. Sufficient it was that they had been the objects of injustice, calumny, persecution, or wrong in any shape — and, without further question, they had 'their place allowed' at Lamb's fireside. I knew some eminent instances of what I am now saying. And I used to think to myself, Were this feature of Lamb's character made known, and the natural results followed, what would he do? Refuse anybody, reject anybody, tell him to begone, he could not, no more than he could have danced upon his mother's grave. He would have received all who presented themselves with any rational pretensions; and would finally have gone to prison rather than reject anybody. I do not say this rhetorically. I knew Lamb; and I know certain cases in which he was concerned — cases which it is difficult to publish with any regard to the feelings of persons now living, but which (if published in all their circumstances) would show him to be the very noblest of human beings. He was a man, in a sense more eminent than would be conceivable by many people, *princely* — nothing short of that in his beneficence. Many liberal people I have known in this world — many who were charitable in the widest sense — many munificent

people; but never any one upon whom, for bounty, for indulgence and forgiveness, for charitable construction of doubtful or mixed actions, and for regal munificence, you might have thrown yourself with so absolute a reliance as upon this comparatively poor Charles Lamb. Considered as a man of genius, he was not in the very first rank, simply because his range was a contracted one: within that range, he was perfect; of the peculiar powers which he possessed, he has left to the world as exquisite a specimen as this planet is likely to exhibit. But, as a *moral* being, in the total compass of his relations to this world's duties, in the largeness and diffusiveness of his charity, in the graciousness of his condescension to inferior intellects, I am disposed, after a deliberate review of my own entire experience, to pronounce him the best man, the nearest in his approaches to an ideal standard of excellence, that I have known or read of. In the mingled purity — a childlike purity — and the benignity of his nature, I again express my own deep feeling of the truth, when I say that he recalled to my mind the image and character of St. John the Evangelist — of him who was at once the beloved apostle, and also, more peculiarly, the apostle of love. Well and truly, therefore, did the poet say, in his beautiful lines upon this man's grave and memory —

'Oh, he was good, if e'er a good man lived!' *

* One feature there was in Lamb's charity, which is but too frequently found wanting amongst the most liberal and large-hearted of the charitable, and especially where the natural temper is melancholy or desponding; one, moreover, which, beyond any other aspect of charity, wears a winning grace — one, finally, which is indistinctly pointed out as a *duty* in our scriptural code of ethics — the habit of *hoping* cheerfully and kindly on behalf of those who were otherwise objects of moral blame. Lamb, if anybody, plagued as he was by a

Perhaps the foundation for the false notion I have mentioned about Lamb's predilections, was to be found in

constitutional taint of morbid melancholy, might have been privileged to fail in this duty; but he did not. His goodness, making it too painful to him to cherish as *final* conclusions any opinions with regard to any individual which seemed to shut him out from the sympathy or the brotherly feeling of the just and good, overpowered the acuteness of his discernment; and where it was quite impossible to find matter of approbation in the past or the present conduct, he would turn to the future for encouraging views of amendment, and would insist upon regarding what was past, as the accidental irregularity, the anomaly, the exception, warranting no inferences with regard to what remained; and (whenever that was possible) would charge it all upon unfortunate circumstances. Everybody must have felt the profound pathos of that passage in scripture — '*Let him that stole, steal no more;*' a pathos which rests evidently upon the sudden substitution for a judicial sentence proportioned to the offence, (such as an ordinary lawgiver would have uttered, and such as the listener anticipates,) of a heavenly light opened upon the guilty heart, showing to it a hope and an escape, and whispering that for itself also there may be final peace in reversion, where otherwise all had seemed blank despair and the darkness of coming vengeance. The poor benighted Pariah of social life — who durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, and, by the angry tone of human laws, as well as of society in general, finds but too much that disposes him to despond, and perhaps makes no effort, merely because all efforts seem likely to be unavailing — will often, in the simple utterance of a cheerful hope on his behalf, see as it were a window opening in heaven, and faces radiant with promise looking out upon him. These words I mean to apply as the distinguishing description of Christian ethics, as contrasted with all other ethical theories. For it is a just inquiry with respect to any system of morals — not merely, What are your substantial doctrines, what is the *corpus* of your laws? — but also, What is your preparatory discipline? — what are the means at your disposal for winning over the reluctant disciple, the bold recusant, or the timid doubter? And it is worthy of remark that, in this case of hoping on behalf of those who did seem no just objects of hope — the very same absence of all compromise with human infirmity is found, which a distinguished German infidel described as

his carelessness for those social proscriptions which have sometimes occurred in our stormy times with respect to writers, male and female, who set the dominant notions, or the prevailing feelings of men — (feelings with regard to sexual proprieties, to social distinctions, to the sanctity of property, to the sanctity of religious formulæ, &c. &c.) — at open defiance. Take, for example, Thelwall, at one time, Holcroft, Godwin, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Dr. Priestley, Hazlitt, all of whom were, more or less, in a backward or inverse sense, *tabooed* — that is, consecrated

the great distinction of Christianity, and one which raised it *primâ facie* above all other codes of morality. There is indeed a descent — a condescension to humanity and its weakness; but no shadow of a compromise — a capitulation — or what in Roman law is called a 'transaction' with it. For, said Immanuel Kant, here lies the point: — the Stoic maintains the moral principle in its ideal purity; he sacrifices nothing at all to human weakness: and so far he deserves praise. But then, for that same reason, he is useless: his standard is exalted beyond all human reproach. On the other hand, the Epicurean relaxes so far as to make *his* method of 'holiness' attainable. But how? It is by debasing and lowering the standard. Each, therefore, in a different sense, and for different reasons, is useless to human nature as it is. Now comes Christianity, and effects a synthesis of all which is good in each, while she purifies herself from all taint of what is evil. She presents a standard of holiness a 'maximum perfectionis,' (as the scholastic phrase is,) no less exalted, no less jealous of all earthly taint or soil, than Stoicism. This, however, she makes accessible to man: not by any compromise or adaptation of its demands to a lower nature; but by means peculiarly her own — by promise of supernatural aid. Thus she is celestial like the one, and terrestrial like the other, but by such a reconciliation as celestial means only could effect. This Kant allowed to constitute a philosophic character for Christianity, which offered itself at the very vestibule. And in this function of hope, as one which is foremost amongst the functions of charity, there is the very same harmony of rigor in the judge, and loyalty to the standard erected, with human condescension and consideration for the criminal.

to public hatred and scorn — with respect to all these persons, feeling that the public alienation had gone too far, or had begun originally upon false grounds, Lamb threw his heart and his doors wide open. Politics — what cared he for politics? Religion — in the sense of theological dogmas — what cared he for religion? For religion in its moral aspects, and its relations to the heart of man no human being ever cared more. With respect to politics, some of his friends could have wished him to hate men when they grew *anti-national*, and in that case only; but he would not. He persisted in liking men who made an idol of Napoleon, who sighed over the dread name of Waterloo, and frowned upon Trafalgar. *There* I thought him wrong; but, in that, as one of my guardians used to say of me, he 'followed his own devil;' though, after all, I believe he took a secret silent pleasure in the grandeur of his country, and would have suffered in her suffering — would have been humiliated in her humiliation — more than he altogether acknowledged to himself; in fact, his carelessness grew out of the depth of his security. He could well afford to be free of anxiety in a case like this; for the solicitudes of jealous affection, the tremulous and apprehensive love, as 'of a mother or a child,' (which painful mood of love Wordsworth professes for his country, but only in a wayward fit of passion,) could scarcely be thought applicable, even in the worst days of Napoleon, to a national grandeur and power which seem as little liable to chance or change, as essentially unapproachable by any serious impeachment, as the principle of gravitation or the composition of the air. Why, therefore, should *he* trouble himself more about the nice momentary oscillations of the national fortunes in war or council, more than about adjusting his balance, so as not to disturb the equilibrium of the earth

There was another trait of character about Charles Lamb, which might have countenanced the common notion that he looked indulgently upon dissolute men, or men notorious for some criminal escapade. This was his thorough hatred of all hypocrisy, and his *practical* display of that hatred on all possible occasions. Even in a point so foreign, as it might seem, from this subject as his style, though chiefly founded upon his intellectual differences and his peculiar taste, the prevailing tone of it was in part influenced (or at least sustained) by his disgust for all which transcended the naked simplicity of truth. This is a deep subject, with as many faces, or *facets*, (to speak the language of jewellers,) as a rose-cut diamond; and far be it from me to say one word in praise of those — people of how narrow a sensibility! — who imagine that a simple (that is, according to many tastes, an unelevated and *unrhythmical*) style — take, for instance, an Addisonian or a Swiftian style — is *unconditionally* good. Not so: all depends upon the subject; and there is a style, transcending these and all other modes of simplicity, by infinite degrees, and, in the same proportion, impossible to most men — the rhythmical — the continuous — what, in French, is called the *soutenu*, which, to humbler styles, stands in the relation of an organ to a shepherd's pipe. This also finds its justification in its subject; and the subject which *can* justify it must be of a corresponding quality — loftier — and, therefore, rare.

If, then, in style — so indirect an expression as *that* must be considered of his nature and moral feelings — how much more, in their direct and conscious expressions, was Lamb impatient of hypocrisy! Hypocrisy may be considered as the heroic form of affectation. Now, the very basis of Lamb's character was laid in downright

horror of affectation. If he found himself by accident using a rather fine word, notwithstanding it might be the most forcible in that place, (the word *arrest*, suppose, in certain situations, for the word *catch*,) he would, if it were allowed to stand, make merry with his own grandiloquence at the moment; and, in after moments, he would continually ridicule that class of words, by others carried to an extreme of pedantry — the word '*arride*,' for instance, used in the sense of *pleasing*, or *winning the approbation* — just as Charles Fox, another patron of simplicity, or, at least, of humility in style was accustomed to use the word '*vilipend*,' as a standing way of sarcastically recalling to the reader's mind the Latinizing writers of English. Hence — that is, from this intense sincerity and truth of character — Lamb would allow himself to say things that shocked the feelings of the company — shocked sometimes in the sense of startling or electrifying, as by something that was odd; but also sometimes shocked with the sense of what was revolting, as by a Swiftian laying bare of naked shivering human nature. Such exposures of masquerading vanity — such surgical probings and vexings of the secret feelings — I have seen almost truculently pursued by Lamb. He seemed angry and fierce in such cases only; but the anger was for the affectation and insincerity, which he could not endure, unless where they covered some shame or timidity, never where they were masks for attacking an individual. The case of insincerity, above all others, which moved his bile, was where, out of some pretended homage to public decorum, an individual was run down on account of any moral infirmities, such as we all have, or have had, or at least so easily and naturally may have had, that nobody knows whether we have them or not. In such a case, and in this only almost, Lamb could be

savage in his manner. I remember one instance, where many of the leading authors of our age were assembled — Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, &c. Lamb was amongst them; and when —— was denounced as a man careless in the education of his children, and generally reputed to lead a licentious life — Pretty fellows *we* are,' said Lamb, 'to abuse him on that last score, when every one of us, I suppose, on going out this night into the Strand, will make up to the first pretty girl he sees.' Some laughed — some looked grim — some looked grand — but Wordsworth, smiling, and yet with solemnity, said — I hope, I trust, Mr. Lamb, you are mistaken, or, at least, you do not include us all in this sweeping judgment?' 'Oh, as to that,' said Lamb, 'who knows? There's no telling: sad Josephs are some of us in this very room.' Upon which everybody laughed, and Lamb amongst them; but he had been indignant and sincere in this rebuke of the hypocritical sacrifice to decorum. He manifested a fervor of feeling in such cases; not of anger primarily to the assailant — *that* was but a reaction — his fervor was a movement of intense and conscientious justice towards the person assailed, as in one who felt that he himself, if not by the very same trespasses, had erred and was liable to err; that he also was a brother in human infirmity, and a debtor to the frailty of all flesh, though not possibly by the same overt acts or habits.

In reviewing the life of Lamb, it is almost inevitable that, to a reader not specially acquainted with its events beyond what Serjeant Talfourd has judged it proper to communicate, many things will appear strange and unexplained. In a copy of the Serjeant s work, now lying before me, which had been borrowed for my use from a distinguished literary lady, I find a pencil mark of inter-

rogation attached to the word '*chequered*,' by which, at p. 334, Vol. II., Lamb's life is characterized. This is a natural expression of surprise, under the suppressions which have been here practised; suppressions dictated alike by delicacy for what is too closely personal, and by reverential pity for what is too afflicting. Still it will be asked by those who read attentively, In what sense was Lamb's life *chequered*? As Wordsworth has scattered repeated allusions to this subject in his fine memorial verses on Lamb, allusions which must, for the present, be almost unintelligible to the great majority of readers; and, as he has done this, notwithstanding he was perfectly aware at the time of the Serjeant's reserve, and aware also that this reserve was not accidental, professing himself, moreover, to be

> 'Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity,
> Which words less free,

(viz. the prose narrative of Lamb's biographer, which wanted, of necessity, the impassioned tenderness of a poetic memorial,)

> 'Presumed not even to touch;'—

under these circumstances it may be right, whilst still persisting in not raising that veil which has been dropped over this subject by Serjeant Talfourd, out of profound feelings for the surviving lady of the family, that sister of Charles Lamb, who presented so much of his own genius and his own disposition, through a softened or lunar reflection, and who was the great consoler of his affliction — that sister,

> 'The meek
> The self-restraining, and the ever kind,
> In whom *his* reason and intelligent heart

Found — for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
All softening, humanizing, hallowing powers,
Whether withheld or for her sake unsought —
More than sufficient recompense · ' —

still persisting, I say, out of veneration for this admirable lady, in refusing to raise the veil, it may yet be lawful so far to assist the reader in penetrating its folds, as that he may apprehend the main features of the case, in a degree sufficient for the application of Wordsworth's else partly unintelligible verses; and the more so, for these two reasons: — 1st, That several passages in these verses are calculated, at any rate, to pique the curiosity, although they do not satisfy it; 2dly, (which must especially be remembered,) A *mere* interest of curiosity, curiosity vulgar and disrespectful, cannot be imagined in this case. A curiosity which put the question suggested by the word *chequered*, and absolutely challenged by Wordsworth's verses, must be already one that has been hallowed and refined by a tender interest in the subject; since no interest short of that, could have attracted a reader to a life so poor in anecdote, or any other vulgar allurements, or, at least, no other could have detained him sufficiently upon its circumstantial parts, to allow of his raising the question.

To approach this question, therefore, in the most proper way, perhaps the very same verses of Wordsworth, which are amongst the parts of the Serjeant's book most fitted to suggest the question, are most fitted to suggest the answer. Being read carefully, without which they will do neither the one nor the other, they indicate their own commentary. One of the most beautiful passages, and, at the same time, of the most significant, is this: —

' Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time

And season's difference — a double tree,
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they — such through life they *might* have been,
In union, in partition only such :
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High.'

They might have exhibited the image of a double tree, in union throughout their joint lives.* *Diis aliter visum est.* And then the poet goes on to shadow forth their real course through this world, and to hint at the sad cause which occasionally separated them, under the image of two ships launched jointly, and for the same voyage of discovery — viewing each other, therefore, as partners pursuing common objects, under common hazards and difficulties — often divided by stress of weather, often rejoining each other at the fixed place of rendezvous, again to be separated, and again to be reunited : —

'Yet, through all visitation and all trials,
Still they were faithful — like two vessels launch'd
From the same beach, one ocean to explore,
With mutual help, and sailing to their league
True as inexorable winds, or bars
(Floating or fix'd) of polar ice, allow.'

But there is another passage still more distinctly pointing the reader's attention to the *recurring* cause of separation : —

* There is, however, an obscurity in the expression at this point of the verses ; it lies partly in the word *such*. The only construction of the verses in harmony with the words, seems the following : They might have appeared as a double tree, &c., whether viewed in those circumstances which united them — viz. in the features of resemblance — or viewed in those of difference, as sex and its moral results, which made the partition between them. Such they *might* have seemed; but calamity wrought a more perfect division between them, under which, they seemed no longer one, but two distinct trees.

'Ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress
And the worse fear of future ill, (which oft
Doth hang around it as a sickly child
Upon its mother,) may be both alike
Disarm'd of power to unsettle present good.'

This mysterious affliction, therefore, of Lamb's life, making that a 'chequered' one, which else had been of a character too absolutely tranquil and monotonous — or ruffled, at least, only by *internal* irritations — was (as we learn from Wordsworth) of a nature to revolve upon him at intervals. One other passage — and this also from a poem of Wordsworth, but one written at the very least, thirty-two years ago, and having no reference at all to the Lambs — may furnish all the additional light which can be needed. It is one of the poems published in 1807, and many of them suggested by personal or local recollections, from a tour then recently performed through Scotland. The poet is speaking of a woman on the Borders, whose appearance and peculiar situation, in relation to a disabled husband, had caught his attention; and the expression of her eye is thus noticed: —

'I look'd and scann'd her o'er and o'er —
The more I looked, I wonder'd more;
When suddenly I seem'd to espy
A trouble in her strong black eye —
A remnant of *uneasy light* —
A flash of something *over-bright.*' —

Now, if the reader will ask himself what cause, apt to recur, in some cases, would be likely to leave these morbid appearances in the eye, this *uneasy light*, and these flashes that were *over-bright* — he will then apprehend, in silence and reverential sympathy, what was that huge and steadfast affliction that besieged, through life, the heart of Charles Lamb.

If the reader will further understand that this affliction was not, as the heaviest afflictions oftentimes become, a mere remembrance echoing from past times — possibly 'a long since cancelled wo;' but that it was a two-headed snake, looking behind and before, and gnawing at his heart by the double pangs of memory, and of anxiety, gloomy and fearful, watching for the future; and finally, that the object of this anxiety, who might at any moment be torn from his fireside, to return, after an interval of mutual suffering, (not to be measured, or even guessed at, but in the councils of God,) was that Madonna-like lady, who, to him renewed the case described with such pathetic tenderness by the Homeric Andromache — being, in fact, his 'all the world;' fulfilling at once all offices of tenderness and duty; and making up to him, in her single character of sister, all that he had lost of maternal kindness — all that for *her* sake he had forborne to seek of affections, conjugal or filial: — weighing these accumulated circumstances of calamity, the feeling reader will be ready to admit that Lamb's cup of earthly sorrow was full enough, to excuse many more than he could be taxed with, of those half-crazy eccentricities in which a constant load of secret affliction (such, I mean, as must not be explained to the world) is apt to discharge itself. Hence, it might be, in part — but some have supposed from a similar, though weaker taint of the same constitutional malady — that Lamb himself discovered symptoms of irregular feeling or thinking, not such as could have been alarming in a general or neutral case, but in a subject known to be affected by these hereditary predispositions, *were* alarming, both to his friends, (those of them, at least, who had known the circumstances,) and, with far heavier reason, to himself. This also is therefore to be added to his afflictions — not merely the fear, constantly impending that his fireside (as

I said before) might be rendered desolate, and *that* by a sudden blow, as well as for an indefinite duration; but also the fear (not equally strong, but equally impending for ever) that he himself, and all his splendid faculties, might, as by a flash of lightning, be swallowed up 'in darkness infinite.'*

Such was the condition of Charles Lamb, and such the temper that in part grew out of it — angelically benign, but also, in a morbid degree, melancholy — when I renewed my acquaintance with him in 1808–14; a period during which I learned to appreciate him better. Somewhere in this period it was, by the way, that I had an opportunity of introducing to his knowledge my brother, 'poor Pink.' Lamb liked him; and the more so, from an accident which occurred at the very second interview that he and Pink ever had. It was in Bond street, at an exhibition of two large and splendid pictures by Salvator Rosa; one representing a forest scene, and a forest recluse, (of what character, in Salvator's intention, may be doubted; but, in the little printed account of the paintings, he was described as Diogenes.) These pictures were, I should think, twelve feet high, at the least, consequently upon a large scale, and the tone of coloring was peculiarly sombre, or rather cold; and it tended even to the monotonous; one almost uniform cheerless tint of yellowish green, with some little perhaps of a warmish umber, overspread the distances; and the foreground showed little else than a heavy dull-toned black. Pink, who knew as little of painting as the *bow'sons* of his various ships, had, however, a profound sensibility to some of its effects; and, if he ever ran up hastily and fearfully to London from Portsmouth, it was sure to be

* 'The angel ended his mysterious rite;
And the pure vision closed in darkness infinite.'

at the time when the annual exhibition of the Academy was open. No exhibition was ever missed by him, whether of a public or comparatively private nature In particular, he had attended, with infinite delight, the exhibition (in Newman Street, I think) of Mr. West's pictures. *Death and his Pale Horse* prodigiously attracted him; and others, from the freshness and gorgeousness of their coloring, had absolutely fascinated his eye. It may be imagined, therefore, with what disgust he viewed two subjects, from which the vast names of the painter had led him to expect so much, but which from the low style of the coloring yielded him so little. There might be forty people in the room at the time my brother and I were there. We had stood for ten or fifteen minutes, examining the pictures, when at length I noticed Charles Lamb, and, at a little distance, his sister. If a creditor had wished to seize upon either, no surer place in London (no, not Drury Lane, or Covent Garden) for finding them, than an exhibition from the works of the old masters. And, moreover, as amongst certain classes of birds, if you have one you are sure of the other, so with respect to the Lambs, (unless in those dreary seasons when the '*dual* unity' — as it is most affectingly termed by Wordsworth — had been for a time sundered into a widowed desolation, by the periodic affliction,) seeing or hearing the brother, you knew that the sister could not be far off. If she *were*, you sighed, knew what that meant, and asked no questions.

Lamb, upon seeing us, advanced to shake hands; but he paused one moment to await the critical dogma which he perceived to be at that time issuing from Pink's lips. That it was vituperation in a high degree, anybody near us might hear; and some actually turned round in frigh

upon catching these profane words: — 'D—— the fellow! I could do better myself.' Wherewith, perhaps unconsciously, but perhaps also by way of enforcing his thought, Pink (who had brought home from his long sea life a detestable practice of chewing tobacco) ejaculated a quid of some coarse quality, that lighted upon the frame of the great master's picture, and, for aught I know, may be sticking there yet. Lamb could not have approved such a judgment — nor perhaps the immeasurable presumption that might seem to have accompanied such a judgment from most men, or from an artist; but he knew that Pink was a mere sailor, knowing nothing historically of art, nor much of the pretensions of the mighty artists. Or, had it been otherwise — at all events, he admired and loved, beyond all other qualities whatsoever, a hearty, cordial sincerity: honest homely obstinacy, not to be enslaved by a great name — though that, again, may, by possibility, become in process of time itself an affectation — Lamb almost reverenced; and therefore it need not surprise anybody, that, in the midst of his loud, unrepressed laughter, he came up to my brother, and offered his hand, with an air of friendliness that flattered Pink, and a little misled him: for, that evening, on dining with Pink, he said to me — 'That Lamb's a sensible fellow. You see how evidently he approved of what I remarked about that old humbugging rascal, Salvator Rosa.' Lamb, in this point, had a feature of character in common with Sir Walter Scott, (at least I suppose it to have been a feature of Sir Walter's mind, upon the information of Professor Wilson,) that, if a man had, or, if he supposed him to have, a strongly marked combination or tendency of feelings, of opinions, of likings, or of dislikings — what in fact, we call a *character* — no matter whether it were built upon prejudices the most extravagant, or ignorance

the most profound, provided only it were sincere, and not mere lawless audacity, but were self-consistent, and had *unity* as respected itself — in that extent, he was sure to manifest liking and respect for the man. And hence it was, that Lamb liked Pink much more for this Gothic and outrageous sentence upon Salvator Rosa, than he would have liked him for the very best, profoundest, or most comprehensive critique upon that artist that could have been delivered. Pink, on the other hand, liked Lamb greatly: and used, in all his letters, to request that I would present his best regards to that Charles Lamb, 'who wouldn't be humbugged by the old rascal in Bond Street.'

Thus I had gradually unlearned my false opinions, or outworn my false impressions, about Lamb, by the year 1814. Indeed, by that time, I may say that I had learned to appreciate Lamb almost at his full value. And reason there was that I should. For, in that year, 1814, occurred a trial of Lamb's hold upon his friends' regard, which was a test case — a test for each side — since not every man could have mastered this offence; and far less could every man have merited that a man *should* master it. This was the year which closed the great war of wars, by its first frail close — the capture of Paris by the Allies. And of these Allies, all who had any personal weight or interest (the Austrian Emperor, who was, however, expected at one time, is no exception — for *his* weight was not personal but political) — all, I say, visited London and Oxford. I was at London during that glad tumultuous season. I witnessed the fervent joy — the triumph, too noble, too religious, to be boastful — the rapture of that great era. Coleridge, in the first edition of the 'Friend,' has described the tempestuous joy of a people, habitually cold in relation

to public events, upon occasion of a visit from their Sovereign's wife — the ill-fated Queen of Prussia; and this he does by way of illustrating the proposition which then occupies him — viz. the natural tendency of men to go beyond the demands of any event, whether personal or national, their inevitable tendency to transcend it by the quality and the amount of their enthusiasm. Now, the scenes then acting in London were, in two weighty respects, different. In the first place, the people — the audience and spectators — concerned, were a people as widely opposed to the Prussians in sensibility of a profound nature as it is possible to imagine; the Prussians being *really* phlegmatic; and the British — as was many hundreds of times affirmed and (as far as the case admitted of proof) proved by the celebrated Walking Stewart, the profoundest of judges on this point — the British being, under the mask of a cold and reserved demeanor, the most impassioned of all nations: in fact, it requires but little philosophy to see, that, always, where the internal heat and power is greatest, there will the outside surface be the coldest; and the mere *primâ facie* phenomenon of heat, spread over the external manner, (as in the French or Italian character, and somewhat in the Irish,) is at once an evidence that there is little concentration of it at the heart. The spectators, then, the audience, were different; and the spectacle — oh, Heavens! — how far it must have differed from any that *can* have been witnessed for many centuries! Victors, victories, mere martial talents — were these the subjects of interest?

No man, not Lamb himself, could rate at a lower price such national vanities as these, fitted only, as I think, to win a schoolboy's sympathy. In fact, I have always entertained and avowed a theory upon the question of

mere military talent, which goes far lower than anybody has yet gone, so far as I am aware; for I have gone so far as to maintain this doctrine — that, if we could detach from the contemplation of a battle the awful interests oftentimes depending upon its issue — if, in fact, we could liberate our minds from the Hartleian law of association, and insulate the mere talent there operating — we should hold the art of fighting a battle to be as far below the art of fighting a game at chess, as the skill applicable to the former case is less sure of its effect and less perfect than the skill applicable to the latter. It is true there are other functions of a commander-in-chief, involving large knowledge of human nature, great energy in action, great decision of character, supreme moral courage, and, above all, that rarest species, which faces, without shrinking, civil responsibility. These qualities, in any eminent degree, are rare. But, confining one's view to the mere art of fighting a battle, I hold and insist upon it, that the military art is (intellectually speaking) a vulgar art, a mechanic art, a very limitary art; neither liberal in its nature, nor elevated (as some mechanic arts are) by the extensive range of its details. With such opinions, I am not a person to be confounded with mere John-Bull exulters in national prowess. Not as victories won by English bayonets or artillery, but as victories in a sublime strife of the good principle with the bad, I entered with all my heart into the fulness of the popular feeling: I rejoiced with the universal nation then rejoicing. There was the 'nation of London' (as I have before called it) to begin with; there was also another nation almost, collected within the walls of London at that time. I rejoiced, as I have said: Lamb did not. Then I was vexed.

CHAPTER IV.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES LAMB.

It was summer. The earth groaned under foliage and flowers — fruits I was going to say, but, as yet, fruits were not — and the heart of man under the burthen of triumphant gratitude: man, I say; for surely to man, and not to England only, belonged the glory and the harvest of that unequalled triumph.* Triumph, however, in the sense of military triumph, was lost and swallowed up in the vast overthrow of evil, and of the evil principle. All nations sympathized with England — with England, as the centre of this great resurrection; centre for the power; centre, most of all, for the moral principle at work. It was, in fact, on that ground, and because all Europe felt and acknowledged that England had put a soul into the resistance to Napoleon, wherever and in whatever corner

* It is a favorite doctrine with some of the Radical Reformers (thanks be to God! not with all,) to vilify and disparage the war with France, from 1793 to 1815, not (as might, perhaps, consistently be done, during some of its years,) but throughout and unconditionally — in its objects, its results, its principles. Even contemplating the extreme case of a conquest by France, some of the Radicals maintain, that we should not have suffered much; that the French were a civilized people; that, doubtless, they (here, however, it was forgotten that this 'they' was not the French people, but the French army) would not have abused their power, even suppose them to have gained possession of London. Candid reader! read Duppa's account of the French reign in Rome; *any* account of Davoust's in Hamburgh; *any* account of Junot's in Lisbon.

manifested — therefore it was that now the crowned heads of Europe, 'with all their peerage,' paid a visit to this marvellous England. It was a distinct act of homage from all the thrones of Europe, now present on our shores, actually, or by representation. Certain it is, that these royal visits to England had no other ground than the astonishment felt for the moral grandeur of the country, which only, amongst all countries, had yielded nothing to fear — nothing to despondency; and also the astonishment felt, at any rate, by those incapable of higher emotions, for its enormous resources, which had been found adequate to the support, not only of its own colossal exertions, but of those made by almost half of Christendom besides. Never before in this world was there so large a congress of princes and illustrious leaders, attracted together by the mere force of unwilling, and, in some instances, jealous admiration. I was in London during that fervent carnival of national enthusiasm; and naturally, though no seeker of spectacles, I saw — for nobody who walked the streets of western London could avoid seeing — the chief objects of public interest. I was passing from Hyde Park along Piccadilly, on the day when the Emperor of Russia was expected Many scores of thousands had gone out of London over Blackfriars' Bridge, expressly to meet him, on the understanding that he was to make his approach by that route. At the moment when I reached the steps of he Pulteney Hotel, a single carriage of plain appearance, followed by two clumsy Cossack small landaus, (or rather what used to be called *sociables*,) approached at a rapid pace: so rapid, that I had not time to pass before the waiters of the hotel had formed a line across the foot-pavement, intercepting the passing. In a moment, a cry arose — 'The Czar! the Czar!' — and before I could count six, I found myself in a crowd. The carriage door

was opened, the steps let down, and one gentleman, unattended, stepped out. His purpose was to have passed through the avenue formed for him, in so rapid a way as to prevent any recognition of his person; but the cry in the street, the huzzas, and the trampling crowd, had brought to a front window on the drawing-room story a lady whom I had seen often before, and knew to be the Duchess of Oldenburg, the Emperor's sister. Her white dress caught the traveller's eye; and he stopped to kiss his hand to her. This action and attitude gave us all an admirable opportunity for scanning his features and whole personal appearance. There was nothing about it to impress one very favorably. His younger brother, the present Emperor, is described by all those who saw him, when travelling in Great Britain, as a man of dignified and impressive exterior. Not so with the Emperor Alexander; he was tall, and seemed likely to become corpulent as he advanced in life, (at that time he was not above thirty-seven;) and in his figure there seemed nothing particularly amiss. His dress, however, was unfortunate; it was a *green* surtout: now, it may be remarked, that men rarely assume this color who have not something French in their taste. His was so in all things, as might be expected from his French education under the literary fribble, Monsieur La Harpe.

But, waiving his appearance in other respects, what instantly repelled all thoughts of an *imperial* presence, was his unfortunate face. It was a face wearing a northern fairness, and not perhaps unaimable in its expression; but it was overladen with flesh, and expressed nothing at all; or, if anything, good humor, good nature, and considerable self-complacency. In fact, the only prominent feature in the Czar's disposition was, an amiable, somewhat sentimental ostentation — amiable, I say, for it was

not connected with a gloomy pride or repulsive arrogance, but with a blind and winning vanity. And this cast of character was so far fortunate, as it supplied impulses to exertion, and irritated into activity a weak mind, that would else, by its natural tendencies, have sunk into torpor. His extensive travels, however, were judiciously fitted for rescuing him from that curse of splendid courts; and his greatest enemy had also been his greatest benefactor, though unintentionally, through the tempestuous agitations of the Russian mind, and of Russian society, in all its strata, during that most portentous of all romances — not excepting any of the crusades, or the adventurous expeditions of Cortez and Pizarro, still less the Parthian invasions of Crassus or of Julian — viz. the *anabasis* of Napoleon. There can be no doubt, to any reflecting mind, that the happiest part of his reign, even to Charles I., was that which was also, in a political sense, the period of his misfortunes — viz. the seven years between 1641 and 1649; three of which were occupied in stormy but adventurous war; and the other four in romantic journeys, escapes, and attempts at escape, checkered, doubtless, with trepidations and anxieties, hope and fear, grief and exultation, which, however much tainted with distress, still threw him upon his own resources of every kind, bodily not less than moral and intellectual, which else the lethargy of a court would have left undeveloped and unsuspected even by himself. Such also had been the quality of the Russian Emperor's experience for some of his later years; and such, probably, had been the result of his own comparative happiness. Yet it was said, that, about this time, the peace of Alexander's mind was beginning to give way. It is well known that a Russian emperor, lord of sixty million lives, is not lord of his own, not at any time. He sleeps always in the

bosom of danger, secret, unfathomable, invisible. It is the inevitable condition of despotism and autocracy that he should do so. And the Russian Czar is, as to security, pretty nearly in the situation of the Roman Cæsar.

He, however, who is always and consciously in danger, may be supposed to become partially reconciled to it. But, be that as it may, it was supposed that, at this time, Alexander became aware of some special conspiracies that were ripening at home against his own person. It was rumored that, just about this time, in the very centre of exuberant jubilations, ascending from every people in Europe, he lost his serenity and cheerful temper. On this one occasion, in the moment of rejoining a sister, whom he was said to love with peculiar tenderness, he certainly looked happy; but, on several subsequent opportunities that I had of seeing him, he looked much otherwise; disturbed and thoughtful, and as if seeking to banish alarming images, by excess of turbulent gayety, by dancing, or by any mode of distraction. Under this influence it was also, or was supposed to be, that he manifested unusual interest in religious speculations; diverting to these subjects, especially to those of a quietist character, (such as the doctrines of the English Quakers,) that enthusiasm which hitherto, for several years, he had dedicated to military studies and pursuits. Meantime, the most interesting feature belonging to the martial equipage which he drew after him, was the multitude of Tartar or other Asiatic objects, men, carriages, &c., prevailing in the crowd, and suggesting the enormous magnitude of the empire from whose remote provinces they came. There were also the European Tartars, the Cossacks, with their Hetman Platoff. He had his abode somewhere to the north of Oxford Street; and further illustrated the imperial grandeur, being himself a sovereign prince, and yet

a vassal when he found himself in the presence of Alexander. This prince, who (as is well known) loved and honored the English, as he afterwards testified by the most princely welcome to all of that nation who visited his territories, was, on his part, equally a favorite with the English. He had lost his gallant son in a cavalry skirmish; and his spirits had been much depressed by that calamity. But he so far commanded himself as to make his private feelings give way to his public enthusiasm; and he never withdrew himself from the clamorous applause of the mob, in which he took an undisguised pleasure. This was the man, amongst all the public visiters now claiming the hospitality of the English Regent, whom Lamb saw and talked of with most pleasure. His sublime ugliness was most delectable to him; and the Tartar propensities, some of which had been perhaps exaggerated by the newspapers, (such for instance, as their drinking the oil out of the street lamps,) furnished him with a constant *feu-de-joie* of jests and playful fictions, at the expense of the Hetman; and in that way it was that he chiefly expressed *his* sympathy with this great festal display.

Marshal Blucher, who still more powerfully converged upon himself the interest of the public, was lodged in a little quadrangle of St. James's Palace, (that to the right of the clock-tower entrance.) So imperious and exacting was the general curiosity to see the features of the old soldier — this Marshal '*Forwards*,' as he was always called in Germany, and who had exhibited the greater merit of an Abdiel fidelity, on occasion of the mighty day of Jena, — that the court was filled from an early hour of every morning, until a late dinner-hour, with a mob of all ranks, calling for him by his name, *'out court*, 'Blucher! Blucher!' At short intervals, no

longer in general than five minutes, the old warrior obeyed the summons throughout the day, unless when he was known to be absent on some public occasion. His slavery must have been most wearisome to his feelings. But he submitted with the utmost good nature, and allowed cheerfully for the enthusiasm which did so much honor to himself and to his country. In fact, this enthusiasm, on his first arrival in London, showed itself in a way that astonished everybody, and was half calculated to alarm a stranger. He had directed the postilion to proceed straightway to Carlton House — his purpose being to present his duty in person to the Regent, before he rested upon English ground. This was his way of expressing his homage to the British nation, for upholding, through all fortunes, that sacred cause of which he also had never despaired. Moreover, his hatred of France, and the very name French, was so intense, that upon that title also he cherished an ancient love towards England. As the carriage passed through the gateway of the Horse-Guards, the crowd, which had discovered him, became enormous. When the garden or Park entrance to the palace was thrown open, to admit Blucher, the vast mob, for the first and the last time, carried the entrance as if by storm. All opposition from the porters, the police, the soldiers on duty, was vain; and many thousands of people accompanied the veteran prince, literally 'hustling' his carriage, and, in a manner carrying him in their arms to the steps of the palace door; on the top of which, waiting to receive him, stood the English Regent. The Regent himself smiled graciously and approvingly upon this outrage, which, on any minor occasion, would have struck him with consternation, perhaps, as well as disgust.

Lamb, I believe, as well as myself, witnessed part of

this scene; which was the most emphatic exhibition of an uncontrollable impulse — a perfect rapture of joy and exultation, possessing a vast multitude with entire unity of feeling, that I have ever witnessed, excepting, indeed, once besides, and that was a scene of the very same kind, or rather a reflection of the same scene. It occurred in Hyde Park, on the following Sunday: Prince Blucher and his master, the King of Prussia; the Hetman of the Cossacks, with his master, the Czar; the Duke of Wellington, with some of the royal Dukes, and a vast *cortége* of civil and military dignities — in short, the élite of all the great names that had grown into distinction in the late wonderful campaigns — German, Spanish, French — rode into the Park, simultaneously. If there had been any division of their several suites and parties, this had vanished; and all were thrown into one splendid confusion, under a summer sun. The park was, of course, floating with a sea of human heads. And, in particular, there was a dense mass of horsemen, amounting to six thousand at least, (as I was told by a person accustomed to compute crowds,) following close in the rear. The van of this mighty body, composed of so many 'princedoms, dominations, virtues, powers,' directed their course to Kensington Gardens — into these, as privileged guests, they were admitted — precautions, founded on the Carlton House experience, having been taken to exclude the *ignobile vulgus* who followed. The impulse, however, of the occasion, was too mighty for the case. The spectacle was absolutely sublime — of hurricane, instantaneous power, sweeping away, like an Alpine lake broken loose, all barriers almost before they were seen. The six thousand horsemen charged into the gardens; that being (as in the other case) the first and also the last intrusion of the kind.

One thing in this popular festival of rejoicing was peculiarly pleasing to myself and to many others — the proof that was thus afforded to so many eminent foreigners of our liberality, and total freedom from a narrow or ungenerous nationality. This is a grave theme, and one which, on account of the vast superstructure reared upon it, of calumnious insult to our national character, requires a separate discussion. Here it may be sufficient to say, that Marshal Blucher, at least, could have no reason to think us an arrogant people, or narrow in our national sensibilities to merit, wherever found. He could not but know that we had also great military names to show — one or two greater than his own; for, in reality, his qualities were those of a mere fighting captain, with no great reach of capacity, and of slender accomplishments. Yet we — that is to say, even the street mob of London — glorified him as much as ever they did Lord Nelson, and more than they ever did the Duke of Wellington. In this crowd, on this memorable Sunday, by-the-by, rode Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, as yet obscure and poor, (not having £300 a year,) and seeing neither his future prosperity, nor its sudden blight, nor its resurrection. There also rode the Prince of Orange, and many another, who was to reap laurels in the coming year, but was yet dreaming not of Waterloo as a possibility. With respect to Blucher, however, it is painful to know that he, who was now so agreeably convinced of our national generosity, came afterwards to show that jealousy of us which we had so loudly refused to feel of him, through the mere mortifications practised on his self-esteem, perhaps maliciously, by the French authorities, in passing by himself and addressing their applications to the Duke of Wellington.

Fouché, Chaboulon de la Râtre, and other writers, have recorded the maniacal rage of Prince Blucher,

when despatches from Paris passed through his camp — nay, were forwarded to his head-quarters, in order to gain — what? Audience from him? No. Sanction from him? No. Merely a countersign, or a passport for the messenger; some purely ministerial act of participation in the transit of the courier; the despatches being uniformly for the Duke of Wellington. This, on the part of the French authorities, must have been, in some respects, a malicious act. Doubtless, the English general was known only in the character of a victor; whereas Blucher (and *that* the old testy hussar should have remembered) had never been known at Paris, for anything but defeats; and, within the week preceding, for a signal defeat, which many think might have been ripened into a smashing overthrow. But, still, there can be no doubt that deadly malice towards the Prussian name was the true ground of the act; for the Parisians bore (and still bear) a hatred to the Prussians, absolutely irrational and inexplicable. The battle of Rosbach can hardly have been the reason, still less the Prussian resumption of the trophies then gathered from France, and subsequently carried off by Napoleon; for, as yet, they had *not* been resumed. The ground of this hatred must have lain in the famous manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick — for he, as a servant of the Prussian throne, and commanding a Prussian army, was looked upon as a Prussian. This change, however, in Blucher — this jealousy of England, within so short a time — astonished and grieved all who had seen him amongst ourselves. Many a time I met him in the street; four or five times in streets where he could not have been looked for — the streets of the *city;* and always with a retinue of applauders, that spread like wildfire. Once only he seemed to have a chance for passing *incognito*. It was in Cheapside. He

was riding, as he generally was, in the open carriage (on this occasion a curricle) of some gentleman with whom he was going to dine, at a villa near London. A brewer's wagon stopped the way for two minutes; in that space of time, twenty people crowded about who knew his features: 'Blucher! Blucher!' resounded through the street in a moment; an uproar rose to heaven; and the old Marshal's face relaxed from its gravity, or its sternness, (though, to say the truth, there was little of determinate expression in his features; and, if he had not been so memorable a person, one would have thought him a mere snuffy old German) — relaxing, however, from his habitual tom-cat gravity, he looked gracious and benign. Then, at least, he loved us English; then he had reason to love us; for we made a pet of him; and a pet in a cause which would yet make his bones stir in the grave — in the national cause of Prussia against France. I have often wondered that he did not go mad with the fumes of gratified vengeance. Revenge is a luxury, to those who *can* rejoice in it at all, so inebriating that possibly a man would be equally liable to madness, from the perfect gratification of his vindictive hatred or its perfect defeat. And, hence, it may have been that Blucher did *not* go mad. Few men have had so ample a vengeance as he, when holding Paris as a conqueror; and yet, because he was but one of several who so held it, and because he was prevented from mining and blowing up the bridge of Jena, in that way, perhaps, the delirium of his vengeance became less intoxicating.

Now, returning to Lamb, I may remark that, at this memorable season, his wayward nature showed itself more conspicuously than ever. One might have thought that, if he manifested no sympathy in a direct shape with the primary cause of the public emotion, still he would

have sympathized, in a secondary way, with the delirious joy which every street, every alley, then manifested, to the ear as well as to the eye. But no! Still, like Diogenes, he threw upon us all a scoffing air, as of one who stands upon a pedestal of eternity, looking down upon those who share in the transitory feelings of their own age. How he felt in the following year, when the mighty drama was consummated by Waterloo, I cannot say, for I was not then in London: I guess, however, that he would have manifested pretty much the same cynical contempt for us children of the time, that he did in all former cases.

Not until 1821, and again in 1823, did I come to know Charles Lamb thoroughly. Politics, national enthusiasm, had then gone to sleep. I had come up to London in a case connected with my own private interest. In the same spirit of frankness that I have shown on other occasions in these personal sketches, I shall here not scruple to mention, that certain pecuniary embarrassments had rendered it necessary that I should extricate myself by literary toils. I was ill at that time, and for years after — ill from the effects of opium upon the liver; and one primary indication of any illness felt in that organ, is peculiar depression of spirits. Hence arose a singular effect of reciprocal action, in maintaining a state of dejection. From the original physical depression caused by the derangement of the liver, arose a sympathetic depression of the mind, disposing me to believe that I never *could* extricate myself; and from this belief arose, by reaction, a thousand-fold increase of the physical depression. I began to view my unhappy London life — a life of literary toils, odious to my heart — as a permanent state of exile from my Westmoreland home. My three eldest children, at that time in the most interesting stages

of childhood and infancy, were in Westmoreland; and so powerful was my feeling (derived merely from a deranged liver) of some long, never-ending separation from my family, that at length, in pure weakness of mind, I was obliged to relinquish my daily walks in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, from the misery of seeing children in multitudes, that too forcibly recalled my own. The Picture of Fox-ghyll, my Westmoreland abode, and the solitary fells about it, upon which those were roaming whom I could not see, was for ever before my eyes. And it must be remembered that distance — the mere amount of distance — has much to do in such a case. You are equally divided from those you love, it is very true, by one hundred miles. But that, being a space which in England we often traverse in eight or ten hours, even without the benefit of railroads, has come to seem nothing at all. Fox-ghyll, on the other hand, was two hundred and eighty miles distant; and from the obstacles at the latter end of the journey, (cross-roads and interruptions of all public communications,) it seemed twice as long.

Meantime, it is very true that the labors I had to face would not, even to myself, in a state of good bodily health, have appeared alarming. *Myself*, I say — for, in any state of health, I do not write with rapidity. Under the influence of opium, however, when it reaches its maximum in diseasing the liver and deranging the digestive functions, all exertion whatever is revolting in excess; intellectual exertion, above all, is connected habitually, when performed under opium influence, with a sense of disgust the most profound for the subject (no matter what) which detains the thoughts; all that morning freshness of animal spirits, which, under ordinary circumstances, consumes, as it were, and swallows up the interval be-

tween one's self and one's distant object, (consumes, that is, in the same sense as Virgil describes a high-blooded horse on the fret for starting, as traversing the ground with his eye, and devouring the distance in fancy before it is approached) — all that dewy freshness is exhaled and burnt off by the parching effects of opium on the animal economy. You feel like one of Swift's *Strulbrugs*, prematurely exhausted of life; and molehills are inevitably exaggerated by the feelings into mountains. Not that it was molehills exactly which I had then to surmount — they were moderate hills; but that made it all the worse in the result, since my judgment could not altogether refuse to go along with my feelings. I was, besides, and had been for some time, engaged in the task of unthreading the labyrinth by which I had reached, unawares, my present state of slavery to opium. I was descending the mighty ladder, stretching to the clouds as it seemed, by which I had imperceptibly attained my giddy altitude — that point from which it had seemed equally impossible to go forward or backward. To wean myself from opium, I had resolved inexorably; and finally I accomplished my vow. But the transition state was the worst state of all to support. All the pains of martyrdom were there: all the ravages in the economy of the great central organ, the stomach, which had been wrought by opium; the sickening disgust which attended each separate respiration; and the rooted depravation of the appetite and the digestion — all these must be weathered for months upon months, and without the stimulus (however false and treacherous) which, for some part of each day, the old doses of laudanum would have supplied. These doses were to be continually diminished; and, under this difficult dilemma — if, as some people advised, the diminution were made by so trifling a quantity as to be imperceptible

— in that case, the duration of the process was interminable and hopeless. Thirty years would not have sufficed to carry it through. On the other hand, if twenty-five to fifty drops were withdrawn on each day, (that is, from one to two grains of opium,) inevitably within three, four, or five days, the deduction began to tell grievously; and the effect was, to restore the craving for opium more keenly than ever. There was the collision of both evils — that from the laudanum, and that from the want of laudanum. The last was a state of distress perpetually increasing, the other was one which did not sensibly diminish — no, not for a long period of months. Irregular motions, impressed by a potent agent upon the blood or other processes of life, are slow to subside; they maintain themselves long after the exciting cause has been partially or even wholly withdrawn; and, in my case, they did not perfectly subside into the motion of tranquil health, for several years.

From all this it will be easy to understand the *fact* — though, after all, impossible, without a similar experience, to understand the *amount* — of my suffering and despondency in the daily task upon which circumstances had thrown me at this period — the task of writing and producing something for the journals, *invita Minerva*. Over and above the principal operation of my suffering state, as felt in the enormous difficulty with which it loaded every act of exertion, there was another secondary effect which always followed as a reaction from the first. And that this was no accident or peculiarity attached to my individual temperament, I may presume from the circumstance, that Mr. Coleridge experienced the very same sensations, in the same situation, throughout his literary life, and has often noticed it to me with surprise and vexation. The sensation was that of powerful disgust

with any subject upon which he had occupied his thoughts, or had exerted his powers of composition for any length of time, and an equal disgust with the result of his exertions — powerfnl abhorrence I may call it, absolute loathing, of all that he had produced. In Mr. Coleridge's case, speaking at least of the time from 1807 to 1815, this effect was a most unhappy one ; as it tended to check or even to suppress his attempts at writing for the press, in a degree which cannot but have been very injurious for all of us who wished to benefit by his original intellect, then in the very pomp of its vigor. This effect was, indeed, more extensive than with myself: with Coleridge, even *talking* upon a subject, and throwing out his thoughts upon it liberally and generally, was an insurmountable bar to writing upon it with effect. In the same proportion in which he had been felicitous as a talker, did he come to loathe and recoil from the subject ever afterwards ; or, at least, so long as any impressions remained behind of his own display. And so far did this go — so uniformly, and so notoriously to those about him — that Miss Hutchinson, a young lady in those days whom Coleridge greatly admired and loved as a sister, submitted at times to the trouble of taking down what fell from his lips, in the hope that it might serve as materials to be worked up at some future period, when the disgust should have subsided, or perhaps in spite of that disgust, when he should see the topics and their illustrations all collected for him, without the painful effort of recovering them by calling up loathsome trains of thought. It was even suggested, and at one time (I believe) formally proposed, by some of Coleridge's friends, that, to save from perishing the overflowing opulence of golden houghts continually welling up and flowing to waste in the course of his ordinary conversation, some short-hand

writer, having the suitable accomplishments of a learned education and habits of study, should be introduced as a domestic companion. But the scheme was dropped; perhaps from the feeling, in Coleridge himself, that he would not command his usual felicity, or his natural power of thought, under the consciousness of an echo sitting by his side, and repeating to the world all the half-developed thoughts or half-expressed suggestions which he might happen to throw out. In the meantime, for the want of some such attendant, certain it is, that many valuable papers perished.

In 1810, 'The Friend' was in a course of publication by single sheets of sixteen pages. These, by the terms of the prospectus, should have appeared weekly. But if, at any time, it happened that Wordsworth, or anybody else interested in the theme, came into Coleridge's study whilst he was commencing his periodical lucubrations, and, naturally enough, led him into an oral disquisition upon it, then perished all chance for that week's fulfilment of the contract. Miss Hutchinson, who was aware of this, did her best to throw hindrances in the way of this catastrophe, but too often ineffectually: and, accordingly, to this cause, as a principal one amongst others, may be ascribed the very irregular intervals between the several numbers of 'The Friend' in its first edition; and to this, also, perhaps, the abrupt termination of the whole at the twenty-ninth number. In after years, Coleridge assured me, that he never could read anything he had written without a sense of overpowering disgust. Reverting to my own case, which was pretty nearly the same as his, there was, however, this difference — that, at times, when I had slept at more regular hours for several nights consecutively, and had armed myself by a sudden increase of the opium for a few days running, I recovered, at times,

a remarkable glow of jovial spirits. In some such artificial respites, it was, from my usual state of distress, and purchased at a heavy price of subsequent suffering, that I wrote the greater part of the Opium Confessions in the autumn of 1821. The introductory part, (*i. e.* the narrative part,) written for the double purpose of creating an interest in what followed, and of making it intelligible, since, without this narration, the dreams (which were the real object of the whole work) would have had no meaning, but would have been mere incoherencies — this narrative part was written with singular rapidity. The rest might be said to have occupied an unusual length of time ; since, though the mere penmanship might have been performed within moderate limits, (and in fact under some pressure from the printer,) the dreams had been composed slowly, and by separate efforts of thought, at wide intervals of time, according to the accidental prevalence, at any particular time, of the separate elements of such dream in my own real dream-experience. These circumstances I mention to account for my having written anything in a happy or genial state of mind, when I was in a general state so opposite, by my own description, to everything like enjoyment. That description, as a *general* one, states most truly the unhappy condition, and the somewhat extraordinary condition of feeling, to which opium had brought me. I, like Mr. Coleridge, could not endure what I had written for some time after I had written it. I also shrunk from treating any subject which I had much considered ; but more, I believe, as recoiling from the intricacy and the elaborateness which had been made known to me in the course of considering it, and on account of the difficulty or the toilsomeness, which might be fairly presumed from the mere fact that I *had* long considered it, or could have found it necessary

to do so, than from any blind mechanical feeling inevitably associated (as in Coleridge it was) with a second survey of the same subject.

One other effect there was from the opium, and I believe it had some place in Coleridge's list of morbid affections caused by opium, and of disturbances extended even to the intellect — which was, that the judgment was for a time grievously impaired, sometimes even totally abolished, as applied to anything which I had recently written. Fresh from the labor of composition, I believe, indeed, that almost every man, unless he has had a very long and close experience in the practice of writing, finds himself a little dazzled and bewildered in computing the effect, as it will appear to neutral eyes, of what he has produced. This result, from the hurry and effort of composition, doubtless we all experience, or at some time *have* experienced. But the incapacitation which I speak of here, as due to opium, is of another kind and another degree. It is mere childless helplessness, or senile paralysis, of the judgment, which distresses the man in attempting to grasp the upshot and the total effect (the *tout ensemble*) of what he has himself so recently produced. There is the same imbecility in attempting to hold things steadily together, and to bring them under a comprehensive or unifying act of the judging faculty, as there is in the efforts of a drunken man to follow a chain of reasoning. Opium is said to have some *specific* effect of debilitation upon the memory; * that is, not merely the

* The *technical* memory, or that which depends upon purely arbitrary links of connection, and therefore more upon a *nisus* or separate activity of the mind — that memory, for instance, which recalls names — is undoubtedly affected, and most powerfully, by opium. On the other hand, the *logical* memory, or that which recalls facts that are connected by fixed relations, and where A being given, B must go before or after — historical memory, for instance — is not much, if at all, affected by opium.

general one which might be supposed to accompany its morbid effects upon the bodily system, but some other more direct, subtle, and exclusive; and this, of whatever nature, may possibly extend to the faculty of judging.

Such, however, over and above the more known and more obvious ill effects upon the spirits and the health, were some of the stronger and more subtle effects of opium in disturbing the intellectual system, as well as the animal, the functions of the will also no less than those of the intellect, from which both Coleridge and myself were suffering at the period to which I now refer (1821–25) — evils which found their fullest exemplification in the very act upon which circumstances had now thrown me as the *sine qua non* of my extrication from difficulties — viz. the act of literary composition. This necessity, the fact of its being my one sole resource for the present, and the established experience which I now had of the peculiar embarrassments and counteracting forces which I should find in opium, but still more in the train of consequences left behind by past opium — strongly co-operated with the mere physical despondency arising out of the liver. And this state of partial unhappiness, amongst other outward indications, expressed itself by one mark, which some people are apt greatly to misapprehend, as if it were some result of a sentimental turn of feeling — I mean perpetual sighs. But medical men must very well know, that a certain state of the liver, *mechanically*, and without any co-operation of the will, expresses itself in sighs. I was much too firm-minded, and too reasonable, to murmur or complain. I certainly suffered deeply, as one who finds himself a banished man from all that he loves, and who had not the consolations of hope, but feared too profoundly that all my efforts — efforts poisoned so sadly by opium — might be unavailing for the end. But still I

endured in silence. The mechanical sighs, however, revealed, or seemed to reveal, what was present in my thoughts. Lamb doubtless remarked them; he knew the general outline of my situation; and, after this, he set himself, with all the kindness of a brother, Miss Lamb with the kindness of a sister, to relieve my gloom by the closest attentions. They absolutely persecuted me with hospitalities; and, as it was by their fireside that I felt most cheered, and sometimes elevated into hope, it may be supposed that I did not neglect to avail myself of the golden hours thus benignantly interposed amongst my hours of solitude, despondency, and labor but partially effectual.

Thus then it arose, and at this period, that I had my first experience of Lamb's nature and peculiar powers. During one part of the time, I, whose lodgings were in York Street, Covent Garden, became near neighbor to the Lambs — who (with a view to the two great theatres, I believe) emigrated for some months from the Temple to Russell Street. With their usual delicacy, the Lambs seemed to guess that, in my frame of mind, society of a mixed character might not be acceptable to me. Accordingly, they did not ask me to their parties, unless where they happened to be small ones; but, as often as they were free of engagements themselves, they would take no denial — come I must, to dine with them and stay as late as I would. The very first time on which these dinner invitations began, a scene occurred with Charles Lamb, which so nearly resembled the Coleridge and 'Ancient Mariner' mystification of years long past, that perhaps, with all my knowledge of his character, I might have supposed him angry or offended in good earnest, had I not recurred to the lesson of that early introductory visit to the Temple. Some accident, or perhaps it was

Lamb himself, had introduced the subject of Hazlitt. Aware of Lamb's regard for him, and of what I esteemed his exaggerated estimate of Hazlitt's powers, I fought shy of any opinion upon him. The fact is, somewhere about that time — but I am not sure whether this had yet happened — Hazlitt had published a little book which was universally laughed at, but which, in one view of it, greatly raised him in my opinion, by showing him to be capable of stronger and more agitating passions than I believed to be within the range of his nature. He had published his 'Liber Amoris, or the Modern Pygmalion.' And the circumstances of the case were these: — In a lodging-house, which was also, perhaps, a boarding-house, in the neighborhood of Lincoln's Inn, Hazlitt had rooms. The young woman who waited on him, was a daughter of the master of the house. She is described by Hazlitt, whose eye had been long familiar with the beauty (real or ideal) of the painters, as a woman of bewitching features; though one thing, which he confesses in his book, or did confess in conversation, made much against it — viz. that she had a look of being somewhat jaded, as if she were unwell, or the freshness of the animal sensibilities gone by. This girl must evidently have been a mercenary person. Well, if she were not an intriguer in the worst sense — in the sense of a schemer, she certainly was. Hazlitt, however, for many weeks (months perhaps) paid her the most delicate attentions, attributing to her a refinement and purity of character to which he afterwards believed that she had no sort of pretensions. All this time — and here was the part of Hazlitt's conduct which extorted some sympathy and honor from me — he went up and down London, raving about this girl. Nothing else would he talk of. 'Have you heard of Miss ——?' And then, to the most indifferent stranger, he would

hurry into a rapturous account of her beauty. For this he was abundantly laughed at. And, as he could not fail to know this — (for the original vice of his character, was dark, sidelong suspicion, want of noble confidence in the nobilities of human nature, faith too infirm in what was good and great) — this being so, I do maintain that a passion, capable of stifling and transcending what was so prominent in his own nature, was, and must have been (however erroneously planted) a noble affection, and justifying that sympathy which I so cordially yielded him. I must reverence a man, be he what he may otherwise, who shows himself capable of profound love.

On this occasion, in consequence of something I said very much like what I am now saying, Hazlitt sent me a copy of his 'Liber Amoris;' which, by the way, bore upon the title-page an engraved copy of a female figure — by what painter I forget at this moment, but I think by Titian — which, as Hazlitt imagined, closely resembled the object of his present adoration. The issue for Hazlitt, the unhappy issue of the tale, was as follows: — The girl was a heartless coquette; her father was an humble tradesman, (a tailor, I think;) but her sister had married very much above her rank; and she, who had the same or greater pretensions personally, now stood on so far better ground than her sister, as she could plead, which originally her sister could not, some good connections. Partly, therefore, she acted in a spirit of manœuvring as regarded Hazlitt: he might do as a *pis aller*, but she hoped to do better; partly also she acted on a more natural impulse. It happened that, amongst the gentleman lodgers, was another, more favored by nature, as to person, than ever Hazlitt had been; and Hazlitt was now somewhat withered by life and its cares. This stranger was her 'fancy-man.' Hazlitt suspected something of

this for a long time; suspected, doted, and was again persuaded to abandon his suspicions; and yet he could not relish her long conversations with this gentleman. What could they have to say, unless their hearts furnished a subject? Probably the girl would have confessed at once a preference, which, perhaps, she might have no good reason for denying, had it not been that Hazlitt's lavish liberality induced him to overwhelm her with valuable presents. These she had no mind to renounce. And thus she went on, deceiving and beguiling, and betraying poor Hazlitt, now half-crazy with passion, until one fatal Sunday. On that day, (the time was evening, in the dusk,) with no particular object, but unhappy because he knew that she was gone out, and with some thought that, in the wilderness of London, he might, by chance, stumble upon her, Hazlitt went out; and not a half mile had he gone, when, all at once, he fancied that he saw her. A second and nearer glance showed him that he was right. She it was, but hanging on the arm of the hated rival — of him whom she had a hundred times sworn that she never spoke to but upon the business of the house. Hazlitt saw, but was not seen. In the blindness of love, hatred, and despair, he followed them home; kept close behind them; was witness to the blandishments freely interchanged, and soon after he parted with her for ever. Even his works of criticism, this dissembling girl had accepted or asked for as presents, with what affectation and hypocrisy Hazlitt now fully understood. In his book, he, in a manner, 'whistles her down the wind;' notwithstanding that, even at that time, 'her jesses' were even yet 'his heart-strings.' There is, in the last apostrophe to her — 'Poor weed!' — something which, though bitter and contemptuous, is yet tender and gentle; and, even from the book, but much

more from the affair itself, as then reported with all its necessary circumstances, something, which redeemed Hazlitt from the reproach (which till then he bore) of being open to no grand or profound enthusiasm — no overmastering passion. But now he showed indeed —

'The nympholepsy of some fond despair.'

Perhaps this furnished the occasion of our falling upon the subject of Hazlitt. What was said will better come in upon another occasion — (viz. that of Hazlitt.) Meantime that Lamb only counterfeited anger, appeared from this — that, after tea, he read me his own fine verses on 'The Three Graces;' and, that I might not go off with the notion that he read only his own verses, afterwards he read, and read beautifully — for of all our poets Lamb only and Wordsworth read well — a most beautiful sonnet of Lord Thurlow, on 'Lacken Water.'

In answer to what I considered Lamb's extravagant estimate of Hazlitt, I had said, that the misanthropy which gives so unpleasant a tone to that writer's works, was, of itself, sufficient to disgust a reader whose feelings do not happen to flow in that channel; that it was, moreover, a crude misanthropy, not resting upon any consistent basis, representing no great principles, good or bad, but simply the peevishness of a disappointed man. I admitted that such a passion as a noble misanthropy was possible; but that there was an ignoble misanthropy; or, (taking an illustration, which I knew would tell with Lamb better than all arguments,) on the one hand, there was the lofty, nay sublime, misanthropy of Timon; on the other, the low villanous misanthropy of Apemantus. Now, the cynicism of Hazlitt, as also of another writer, who, in our times, affected misanthropy, if not exactly hat of Apemantus, was too much akin to it; not built on

the wild indignation of a generous nature, outraged in its best feelings, but in the envy of a discontented one. Lamb paused a little; but at length said, that it was for the intellectual Hazlitt, not the moral Hazlitt, that he professed so much admiration. Now, as all people must admit the splendid originality of much that Hazlitt has done, here there might have been a ready means, by favor of the latitude allowed to general expressions, for one, like me, who disliked disputing, to effect a compromise with my opponent. But, unfortunately, Lamb chose to insinuate (whether sincerely and deliberately I cannot say) that Hazlitt was another Coleridge; and that, allowing for his want of poetic power, he was *non tam impar quam dispar*. This I could not stand. I, whose studies had been chiefly in the field of philosophy, could judge of *that*, if I could judge of anything; and certainly I felt entitled to say that anything which Hazlitt might have attempted in philosophy — as his 'Essay on the Principles of Human Action,' and his polemic 'Essay against the Hartleian theory' — supposing even that these were not derived entirely from Coleridge (as C. used to assert) — could, at the best, be received only as evidences of ingenuity and a natural turn for philosophizing; but, for any systematic education or regular course of reading in philosophy, these little works are satisfactory proofs that Hazlitt had them not. The very language and terminology which belong to philosophy, and are indispensable to its free motion, do not seem to have been known to him. And, whatever gleams of wandering truth might flash at times upon his mind, he was at the mercy of every random impulse; had no principles upon any subject; was eminently one-sided; and viewed all things under the angle which chance circumstances presented, never from a central station. Something of this I said

not wishing or hoping to disturb Lamb's opinion, but piqued a little by what seemed to me not so much honor done to Hazlitt as wrong done to Coleridge. Lamb felt, or counterfeited a warmth, that for the moment looked like anger. 'I know not,' he said, 'where you have been so lucky as to find finer thinkers than Hazlitt; for my part, I know of none such. You live, I think, or have lived, in Grasmere. Well, I was once there. I was at Keswick, and all over that wild country; yet none such could I find there. But, stay, there are the caves in your neighborhood, as well as the lakes; these we did not visit. No, Mary,' turning to his sister, 'you know we didn't visit the caves. So, perhaps, these great men live there. Oh! yes, doubtless, they live in the caves of Westmoreland. But you must allow for us poor Londoners. Hazlitt serves for *our* purposes. And in this poor, little, inconsiderable place of London, he is one of our very prime thinkers. But certainly I ought to have made an exception in behalf of the philosophers in the caves.' And thus he ran on, until it was difficult to know whether to understand him in jest or earnest. However, if he felt any vexation, it was gone in a moment; and he showed his perfect freedom from any relic of irritation, by reading to me one or two of his own beautiful compositions — particularly 'The Three Graves.' Lamb read remarkably well. There was rather a defect of vigor in his style of reading; and it was a style better suited to passages of tranquil or solemn movement, than to those of tumultuous passion. But his management of the pauses was judicious, his enunciation very distinct, his tones melodious and deep, and his cadences well executed. The book from which he read, was a folio manuscript, in which he had gathered together a number of gems, either his own, or picked up at

random from any quarter, no matter how little in the sunshine of the world, that happened to strike his fancy. Amongst them was one which he delighted to read to his friends, as well on account of its real beauty, as because it came from one who had been unworthily treated and so far resembled himself. It was a sonnet of Lord Thurlow, a young poet of those days, who has, I believe, been long dead. I know not whether there is anything besides of equal value amongst this noble writer's works; but assuredly the man who could have written this one sonnet, was no fair subject for the laughter which saluted him on his public appearance as an author. It was a sonnet on seeing some birds in a peculiar attitude by the side of Lacken Water. And the sentiment expressed was thankfulness to nature for her bounty in scattering instruction everywhere, and food for meditation, far transcending in value, as well as in extent, all the teaching of the schools. But the point of the whole, which peculiarly won Lamb's approbation, was the way in which the poet had contrived to praise the one fountain of knowledge without disparaging the other. Accordingly, Lamb used always to solicit the hearer's attention, by reading it twice over, to that passage —

> 'There need not schools, nor the Professor's chair,
> *Though these be good,* to' ———

This sudden turning aside to disclaim any blame of the one power, because he was proclaiming the all-sufficiency of the other, delighted Lamb, as a peculiarly graceful way of expressing the catholic charity which becomes a poet. For it is a maxim to which Lamb often gave utterance, (see, for instance, his letters to Bernard Barton,) that the genial effect of praise or admiration is robbed of its music, and untuned, by founding it upon some blame or harsh disparagement of a kindred object.

If blame be right and called for, then utter it boldly; but do not poison the gracious charities of intellectual love and reverence, when settling upon grand objects, nor sully the brightness of those objects, by forcing the mind into a remembrance of something that cannot be comprehended within the same genial feelings. No maxim could better display the delicacy and purity of Lamb's childlike spirit of love, to which it was a disturbance and a torture even to be reminded that there was anything existing that was legitimately a subject for a frown or a scowl.

About this time it was — the time, viz. from 1821 to 1825 — that Lamb first, to my knowledge, fell into the habit of sleeping for half an hour or so after dinner. These occasions exhibited his countenance in its happiest aspect; his slumbers were as tranquil as those of the healthiest infant; and the serene benignity of his features became, in those moments, as I have heard many persons remark, absolutely angelic. That was the situation for an artist to have chosen, in order to convey an adequate impression of his countenance. The portrait of him, prefixed to Sergeant Talfourd's book, is far from being a good likeness; it has the air of a Venetian senator, and far more resembles Mr. Hamilton Reynolds, the distinguished wit, dressed for an evening party, than Charles Lamb. The whole-length sketch is better; but the nose appears to me much exaggerated in its curve.

With respect to Lamb's personal habits, much has been said of his intemperance; and his biographer justly remarks, that a false impression prevails upon this subject. In eating, he was peculiarly temperate; and, with respect to drinking, though his own admirable wit, (as in that delightful letter to Mr. Carey, where he describes himself, when confided to the care of some youthful protector, as

an old reprobate Telemachus consigned to the guidance of a wise young Mentor') — though, I say, his own admirable wit has held up too bright a torch to the illumination of his own infirmities, so that no efforts of pious friendship could now avail to disguise the truth, yet it must not be forgotten — 1st, That we are not to imagine Lamb's frailty in this respect habitual or deliberate — he made many powerful resistances to temptation; 2dly, he often succeeded for long seasons in practising entire abstinence; 3dly, when he *did* yield to the mingled temptation of wine, social pleasure, and the expansion of his own brotherly heart, that prompted him to entire sympathy with those around him, (and it cannot be denied that, for any one man to preserve an absolute sobriety amongst a jovial company, wears too much the churlish air of playing the spy upon the privileged extravagances of festive mirth) — whenever this *did* happen, Lamb, never, to my knowledge, passed the bounds of an agreeble elevation. He was joyous, radiant with wit and frolic, mounting with the sudden motion of a rocket into the highest heaven of outrageous fun and absurdity; then bursting into a fiery shower of puns, chasing syllables with the agility of a squirrel bounding amongst the trees, or a cat pursuing its own tail; but, in the midst of all this stormy gayety, he never said or did anything that could by possibility wound or annoy. The most noticeable feature in his intoxication, was the suddenness with which it ascended to its meridian. Half a dozen glasses of wine taken during dinner — for everybody was encouraged, by his sunshiny kindness, to ask *him* to take wine — these, with perhaps one or two after dinner, sufficed to complete his inebriation to the crisis of sleep; after awaking from which, so far as I know, he seldom recommenced drinking. This sudden consummation of the effects was not,

perhaps, owing to a weaker, (as Sergeant Talfourd supposes,) but rather to a more delicate and irritable system, than is generally found amongst men. The sensibility of his organization was so exquisite, that effects which travel by separate stages with most other men, in him fled along the nerves with the velocity of light. He had great merit in his frequent trials of abstinence; for the day lost its most golden zest, when he had not the genial evening on which to fasten his anticipations. True, his mornings were physically more comfortable upon this system; but then, unfortunately, that mode of pleasure was all reaped and exhausted in the act of enjoyment, whilst the greater pleasure of anticipation, *that* (as he complained himself) was wanting unavoidably, because the morning unhappily comes at the wrong end of the day; so that you may indeed look back to it as something which you have lost, through the other hours of the day; but you can never look forward to it as something which is coming.

It is for ever to be regretted that so many of Lamb's jests, repartees, and pointed sayings, should have perished irrecoverably; and from their fugitive brilliancy, which, (as Sergeant Talfourd remarks,) often dazzled too much to allow of the memory coolly retracing them some hours afterwards; it is also to be regretted that many have been improperly reported. One, for instance, which had been but half told to his biographer, was more circumstantially and more effectually related thus, in my hearing, at Professor Wilson's, by Dr. Bowring, soon after the occasion. It occurred at Mr. Coleridge's weekly party at Highgate. Somebody had happened to mention that letter of Dr. Pococke, upon the Arabic translation of Grotius de Veritate Fidei Christ., in which he exposes the want of authority for the trite legend of Mahomet's pigeon, and justly insists upon the necessity of expunging

a fable so certain to disgust learned Mussulmans, before the books were circulated in the East. This occasioned a conversation generally, upon the Mahometan creed, theology, and morals; in the course of which, some young man, introduced by Edward Irving, had thought fit to pronounce a splendid declamatory eulogium upon Mahomet and all his doctrines. This, as a pleasant extravagance, had amused all present. Some hours after, when the party came to separate, this philo-Mahometan missed his hat, upon which, whilst a general search for it was going on, Lamb, turning to the stranger, said — 'Hat, sir! — your hat! Don't you think you came in a turban?' The fact that the hat *was* missing, which could not have been anticipated by Lamb, shows his readiness, and so far improves the Sergeant's version of the story.

Finally, without attempting, in this place, any elaborate analysis of Lamb's merits, (which would be no easy task,) one word or two may be said generally, about the position he is entitled to hold in our literature, and, comparatively, in European literature. His biographer thinks that Lamb had more points of resemblance to Professor Wilson, than to any other eminent person of the day. It would be presumptuous to dismiss too hastily any opinion put forward by the author of 'Ion;' otherwise, I confess, that, for my own part, knowing both parties most intimately, I cannot perceive much closer resemblance than what must always be found between two men of genius; whilst the differences seem to me radical. To notice only two points, Professor Wilson's mind is, in its movement and style of feeling, eminently diffusive — Lamb's discontinuous and abrupt. Professor Wilson's humor is broad, overwhelming, riotously opulent — Lamb's is minute, delicate, and scintillating. In one feature, though otherwise as different as possible, Lamb resembles Sir Walter Scott

— viz. in the dramatic character of his mind and taste. Both of them recoiled from the high ideality of such a mind as Milton's; both loved the mixed standards of the world as it is — the dramatic standards in which good and evil are intermingled; in short, that class of composition in which a *human* character is predominant. Hence, also, in the great national movements, and the revolutionary struggles, which, in our times, have gone on in so many interesting parts of the world, neither Sir Walter Scott nor Lamb much sympathized, nor much affected to sympathize, with the aspirations after some exaltation for human nature by means of liberty, or the purification of legal codes or of religious creeds. They were content with things as they are; and, in the dramatic interest attached to these old realities, they found sufficient gratification for all their sensibilities. In one thing, upon consideration, there *does* strike me, some resemblance between Lamb and Professor Wilson — viz. in the absence of affectation, and the courageous sincerity which belong to both; and also, perhaps, as Serjeant Talfourd has remarked, in the comprehensiveness of their liberality towards all, however opposed to themselves, who have any intellectual distinctions to recommend them.

But, recurring to the question I have suggested of Lamb's general place in literature, I shall content myself with indicating my own views of that point, without, however, pausing to defend them. In the literature of every nation, we are naturally disposed to place in the highest rank those who have produced some great and colossal work — a 'Paradise Lost,' a 'Hamlet,' a 'Novum Organum' — which presupposes an effort of intellect, a comprehensive grasp, and a sustaining power, for its original conception, corresponding in grandeur to that

effort, different in kind, which must preside in its execution. But, after this highest class, in which the power to conceive and the power to execute are upon the same scale of grandeur, there comes a second, in which brilliant powers of execution, applied to conceptions of a very inferior range, are allowed to establish a classical rank. Every literature possesses, besides its great national gallery, a cabinet of minor pieces, not less perfect in their polish, possibly more so. In reality, the characteristic of this class is elaborate perfection — the point of inferiority is not in the finishing, but in the compass and power of the original creation, which (however exquisite in its class) moves within a smaller sphere. To this class belong, for example, 'The Rape of the Lock,' that finished jewel of English literature; 'The Dunciad,' (a still more exquisite gem;) 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' (in its earlier part;) in German, the 'Luise' of Voss; in French — what? Omitting some others that might be named, above all others, the Fables of La Fontaine. He is the pet and darling, as it were, of the French literature. Now, I affirm that Charles Lamb occupies a corresponding station to his own literature. I am not speaking (it will be observed) of kinds, but of degrees in literary merit; and Lamb I hold to be, as with respect to English literature, that which La Fontaine is with respect to French. For, though there may be little resemblance otherwise, in this, they agree, that both were wayward and eccentric humorists; both confined their efforts to short flights; and both, according to the standards of their several countries, were, occasionally, and, in a lower key, poets. The brutal 'Tales' of La Fontaine do not merit to be considered in such an estimate; for they are simply vulgar and obscene jokes thrown into a metrical version;

and are never treated, as indeed they rarely could be treated, poetically. The 'Fables'* are a work of more pretension; and throughout the works of La Fontaine there is an occasional felicity in the use of conversational phrases and conversational forms. But if any reader would wish to see the difference between an inspired writer and a merely *naïf* writer of unusual cleverness — if he would wish to see the magical effects that may be produced upon the simplest incidents by a truly poetic treatment — I would recommend to his notice the fable of the oak and the broom, as told by Wordsworth, with one on the same subject by La Fontaine. In the one fable, such a soul is introduced beneath the ribs of what else are lifeless symbols, that, instead of a somewhat comic effect, the reader is not surprised to find a pensive morality breathing from the whole, and a genuine pathos attained, though couched in symbolic images. But in La Fontaine we find, as usual, levity in the treatment, levity in the result, and his highest attainment lying in the *naïveté* or picturesque raciness of his expressions.

Wordsworth, however, it will be said, is not Lamb. No; but Lamb, although upon a lower scale, has something of the same difference in point of feeling; and his impulses, like those of Wordsworth, are derived from the depths of

* By the way, it has been made a matter of some wonder in the annals of literature, why La Fontaine was amongst the very few eminent writers of that age who did not bask in the court sunshine; and La Harpe, with many others, fancies that his 'Tales' excluded him. But there is no wonder to those who are acquainted with his 'Fables.' The ludicrous picture which he constantly presents of courts, and courtiers, and royalty — in treating many of those fables which relate to the lion, &c. — must have confounded and mortified the pompous scenica. Louis XIV. more than the most audacious acts of rebellion; and could not have been compensated by the hollow formality of a few stilted dedicatory addresses.

nature, not from the surfaces of manners. We need not, indeed, wonder at the profounder feeling, and the more intense, as well as consistent originality of Lamb, when we contrast his character, disposition, life, and general demeanor, as I have here endeavored to sketch them, with what we know of La Fontaine, viewed under the same aspects. Not only was La Fontaine a vicious and heartless man, but it may be said of him, with perfect truth, that his whole life was a lie, and a piece of hollow masquerading. By some accident, he had gained the character of an absent man; and, for the sake of sustaining this distinction, with the poor result of making sport for his circle, he committed extravagances which argue equal defect of good sense and sincere feeling in him who was the actor, and in those who accredited them. A man, who could seriously affect not to recognize his own son, and to put questions about him as about a stranger, must have been thoroughly wanting in truth of character. And we may be assured, that no depth of feeling in any walk of literature or poetry ever grew upon the basis of radical affectation. The very substratum of Lamb's character, as I have said before, lay in the most intense hostility to affectation. This, however, touches the *quality* of their social merits; and at present I am merely concerned with the *degree;* having selected La Fontaine as that one amongst the French classics who best expresses by analogy the true position and relative rank which the voice of posterity will assign to Charles Lamb in the literature of his own country. His works — I again utter my conviction — will be received as amongst the most elaborately finished gems of literature; as cabinet specimens which express the utmost delicacy, purity, and tenderness of the national intellect, together with the rarest felicity of finish and expression, although it may be the province of other

modes of literature to exhibit the highest models in the grandeur and more impassioned forms of intellectual power. Such is my own intimate conviction; and, accordingly, I reckon it amongst the rarest accidents of good fortune which have gilded my literary experience, that, although residing too often at a vast distance from the metropolis to benefit by my opportunities so much as I desired, yet, by cultivating those which fell naturally in my way at various periods, but, most of all, at that period when I may consider my judgment to have been maturest, I reaped so much delight from that intercourse, and so far improved it into a fraternal familiarity, as to warrant me in assuming the honorable distinction of having been a friend of Charles Lamb.*

* Among the prominent characteristics of Lamb, I know not how it is that I have omitted to notice the peculiar emphasis and depth of his courtesy. This quality was in him a really chivalrous feeling, springing from his heart, and cherished with the sanctity of a duty. He says somewhere in speaking of himself, under the mask of a third person, whose character he is describing, that, in passing a servant girl even at a street-crossing, he used to take off his hat Now, the *spirit* of Lamb's gallantry would have prompted some such expression of homage, though the customs of the country would not allow it to be *literally* fulfilled, for the very reason that would prompt it — viz. in order to pay respect — since the girl would, in such a case, suppose a man laughing at her But the instinct of his heart was — to think highly of female nature, and to pay a real homage (not the hollow demonstration of outward honor, which a Frenchman calls his 'homage,' and which is really a mask for contempt) to the sacred *idea* of pure and virtuous womanhood. The one sole case I remember in which Lamb was betrayed into — not discourtesy — no, that could not be — but into a necessity of publicly professing a hostile feeling, was in the letter (now we may say *celebrated* letter) to Mr. Southey. To this, however, he was driven not by any hostile feeling towards Southey, but simply by a feeling too animated of sympathy with those who happened to be on questions of public interest hostile to Southey. Lamb, it must be

remembered, was — that is, he called himself — a dissenter. Was he such in reality? — Not at all. So far from adopting the distinctions of his religious party, he was not even thoroughly aware of them. But with Lamb it happened, as with many another man, though careless of the distinctions which bound him to a party, still he was in profession faithful to his party, as a principle of honor. I know many men at this day, who, if left to choose a form of religion — left unfettered by old family connections — would much prefer connecting themselves with the Church of England. But they are restrained and kept loyal to their section of dissent, not by religious considerations, but by worldly honor; the appealing look of the clergyman, resting perhaps his influence one half upon old household recollections — upon the father whom he counselled, the grandfather he prayed with. Such look, such recollections, who could resist — who ought to resist? The only plan is this: when the old minister dies — in the interregnum — whilst as yet the new minister is not — bolt, cut and run. Lamb's situation was difficult; Southey assures us that he knew himself to be wrong: he did not. *Your penitent* Lamb was for the ear of Southey — he never meant it for the world.

CHAPTER V.

WALLADMOR.

Now let me pass to a part of my London literary life, interesting in its circumstances; and a part it was which interested Charles Lamb, though I doubt whether he ever went so far in his interest as to look into the book which records my share in the affair. This affair had thus far a general interest, that it was undoubtedly the most complete hoax that ever can have been perpetrated. The circumstances are these: — After the Author of 'Waverley' had for a considerable succession of years delighted the world with one or two novels annually, the demand for Waverley novels came to be felt as a periodical craving all over Europe; just as, in the case of Napoleon, some bloody battle by land or by sea was indispensable, after each few months' interval, to pacify the public taste for blood, long irritated by copious gratification. Now it happened in 1823 that no Waverley novel was in readiness, or likely to be in readiness for the Leipsic Fair at Michaelmas. Upon which a cry arose amongst the German booksellers — *Forge one!* 'Presumptuous enough *that*,' the reader will say. Doubtless. However, the thing was done. A German, and (to better the case) a German of ultra-dulness, set to work upon a novel. He called it 'Walladmor' — a name, by the way, to be accented not upon the penultimate, 'Walládmor,' but upon the ante-

penultimate or first syllable — viz. 'Wálladmor,' as appears from the old rhymes connected with the tale — *e. g.* : —

> 'When blackmen storm the outer door,
> Grief shall be over at Walladmor;'

where all would be spoiled, if the accent were thrown on the penultimate. Well, this book — this 'Walladmor' — made its appearance in the German language, not as what it really was — a German novel, written by a German novelist — but as a translation from an English original of Sir Walter Scott. In this character it appeared at Leipsic; in this character it was instantly dispersed over the length and breadth of Germany; and in this character it crossed the sea to London. I must here stop to mention, that other tricks had been meditated upon Sir Walter: and I will venture to say, that, sooner or later, one of these tricks will be tried. In a country like England, where (by means of our exquisite organization through newspapers, &c., and our consequent unity of feeling) an author may acquire a more intense popularity, and more rapidly, than he ever can upon the Continent, there will always be a motive for pirating such an author, or for counterfeiting him, beyond what is ever likely to exist upon the Continent. In Sir Walter Scott's case, it is true, there was a mystery which added greatly to the popularity. But still it strikes me, that, simply from the unifying powers at work amongst ourselves, more intense popularity will continually arise in this country than can elsewhere. The everlasting reverberation of a name from a dense population, furnished with the artificial means for prolonging and repeating the echoes, must lead to a result quite inconceivable amongst the non-conducting and frittered population of Germany. There will, therefore,

arise in the course of the next century, continual temptations for repeating the trick of counterfeiting, and also that other trick meditated upon Sir Walter (or rather upon the house of Constable) which I am going to mention. — It had been much agitated * in Germany, and I

* This was a question almost sure to be suggested, if it were only by the intense book-trade interest that had gradually connected itself with the priority of importation, and the priority of translation, on any occasion of a Waverley novel. Bribes were offered by commission for the furtive transmission of proof sheets from the Edinburgh press, expresses were kept sleeping in boots and spurs, to forward the earliest copies; translators were pre-occupied by retaining fees; for instance, Lindau, Methusalem, Muller, Dr. Spieker, Lotz, Von Halem, and many others; and between these translators, the most furious races were run — all in order to insure an earlier entrance into the market; for, though Leipsic, in its half-yearly fairs, was the general market, still, in a special call like this, there were extraordinary means of getting into circulation. Hence, and from a competition so burning, it may be readily supposed, that many errors would creep into the translations; and especially where imperfect parts of volumes happened to be transmitted; of which there is an amusing instance mentioned by the German author of 'Walladmor,' in his dedication to Sir Walter Scott: — 'Ah, Sir Walter! did you but know to what straits the poor German translator of a Walter-Scottish novel is reduced, you would pardon greater liberties than any I have taken. *Ecoutez.* First of all, comes the publisher, and cheapens a translator in the very cheapest market of translation-jobbers that can be supposed likely to do any justice to the work Next come the sheets, dripping wet from the Edinburgh press, with or without sense and connection, just as chance may order it. Nay, it happens not unfrequently that, if a sheet should chance to end with one or two syllables of an unfinished word, we Germans are obliged to translate this first instalment of a future meaning; and, by the time the next sheet arrives with the syllables in arrear, we first learn into what confounded scrapes we have fallen, by guessing and translating at hap-hazard. *Nomina sunt odiosa:* else — but I shall content myself with reminding the public of the well known and sad mishap which occurred in the translation of Kenilworth. This

believe also in France, whether — if a translation were made of a Waverley novel into a foreign language, and afterwards that translation (German suppose, or French) were translated back into English by a person who had never seen the original, and who consequently would give a sufficient coloring of difference to the style — whether, I say, that retranslation might not be lawfully introduced into England, and lawfully sustain itself as a saleable commodity in the character of a foreign book.

Meantime, whilst this suggestion was under debate — a suggestion which applied entirely to the case of a true Waverley novel — one bookseller hit upon another more directly applying to the present case of September, 1824, the unexpected case of no Waverley novel offering to appear. He, therefore, this enterprising bibliopole, Her Herbig of Berlin, resolved to have one forged; and without delay he hired the man that should forge it. Well, this forgery was perpetrated; and, the better to hoax the

is sufficiently notorious. Another is more recent — I will relate it: The sheet, as it was received from Edinburgh, closed unfortunately thus: — "*To save himself from these disasters, he became an agent of Smith-;*" and we all translated — "*Um sich ans diesen trübseligkeitan zu erreten wurde er agent bei einem Schmiedemeister;*" that is, *he became foreman to a blacksmith*. Now, sad it is to tell what followed. We had dashed at it, and we waited in trembling hope for the result. Next morning's post arrived, and showed that all Germany had been basely betrayed by a catch-word of Mr. Constable's. For the next sheet took up the imperfect catch-word thus: — "*field matches*, (*i. e.* Smithfield matches,) *or marriages contracted for money:*" and the German sentence should have been cobbled and put to rights as follows: — Er negociste, um sich aufzuhelfin, die sogenannten Smithfields heirathen, &c. *Should* have been, I say; but, wo is me for all Germany! it was too late; the translated sheet had been already finished off with the blacksmith in it — Heaven confound him! And the blacksmith is there to this day and cannot be ejected.'

German public, in three volumes. London it reached on a certain day in the autumn of 1824, towards the close of September or of October, I really forget which; but this I remember, that there was barely a space of forty-eight hours for reading and reviewing the book, a book of a thousand pages, before the literary journals of the month would be closed of necessity against further contributions. One copy only had been received as yet in London; and this was bespoke for Sir Walter Scott. Somebody's interest, I know not whose, procured it for me, as a man who read German fluently; and within the time allowed, I had completed a tolerably long article for the *London Magazine*. It may be supposed that reading the book was quite out of the question, for one who had, in so brief a time, to write a long paper upon it. The course I pursued, therefore, was this: — I drew up a somewhat rhetorical account of the German hoax; explained the drift of it; and then gave a translation of such passages as had happened to strike me. To the best of my remembrance, I selected three: one, the opening chapter, which introduces the two heroes of the novel, as sole survivors of a steamer which had blown up in the Bristol Channel, swimming in company, then engaged in a murderous conflict for a barrel, and finally reconciled, by mutual acts of generosity, into giving each other all the assistance within their power. This was a truly German scene. The next was a snow storm amongst the mountains of Merionethshire, and not without some interest. The last described the committal of a principal person in the tale to an ancient castle, (Walladmor,) on a charge of treason. And, in this case, the incidents moved amongst picturesque circumstances of mountain scenery, with the adjuncts of storm and moonlight, not ill described.

How it could have happened, I do not know, but it *did*

happen, that I had stumbled by pure accident upon almost every passage in the whole course of the thousand pages which could be considered tolerable. Naturally enough, the publishers of the *London Magazine* were encouraged by these specimens to hope well of the book; and, at their request, I undertook to translate it. Confident in my powers of rapid translation, I undertook even to keep up with the printer; three sheets, or forty-eight pages, I made sure of producing daily; at which rate, a volume would be finished in a week, and three weeks might see the whole work ready for the public. Never was there such a disappointment, or such a perplexity. Not until the printing had actually commenced, with arrangements for keeping several compositors at work, did I come to understand the hopeless task I had undertaken. Such rubbish — such 'almighty' nonsense, (to speak *transatlanticè*,) — no eye has ever beheld as nine hundred and fifty, to say the very least, of these thousand pages. To translate them was perfectly out of the question; the very devils and runners of the press would have mutinied against being parties to such atrocious absurdities. What was to be done? Had there been any ready means for making the publishers aware of the case in its whole extent, probably I should have declined the engagement, but, as this could not be accomplished without reading half a volume to them, I thought it better to pursue the task; mending and retouching into something like common sense wherever that was possible; but far more frequently forging new materials, in pure despair of mending the old; and reconstructing, very nearly, the whole edifice from the foundation upwards. And hence arose this singular result: that, without any original intention to do so, I had been gradually led by circumstances, to build upon this German hoax a second and equally

complete English hoax. The German 'Walladmor' professed to be a translation from the English of Sir Walter Scott; my 'Walladmor' professed to be a translation from the German; but, for the reasons I have given, it was no more a translation from the German than the German from the English. It must be supposed that writing into the framework of another man's story fearfully cramped the freedom of my movements There were absurdities in the very conduct of the story and the development of the plot, which could not always be removed without more time than the press allowed me; for I kept the press moving, though slowly; namely, at the rate of half-a-sheet (eight pages) a day. In some instances, I let the incidents stand, and contented myself with rewriting every word of the ridiculous narration, and the still more ridiculous dialogues. In others, I recomposed even the incidents. In particular, I was obliged to put in a new catastrophe. Upon this it struck me, that certain casuistical doubts might arise, as to the relation which I held to my German principal, which doubts I thus expressed, in a dedication to that person: —

'Having some intention, sir, of speaking rather freely of you and your German translation, in a postscript to the second volume of my English one, I am shy of sending a presentation copy to Berlin. Neither you nor your publisher might relish all that I may take it into my head to say. Yet, as books sometimes travel far, if you should ever happen to meet with mine knocking about the world in Germany, I would wish you to know that I have endeavored to make you what amends I could, for any little affront which I meditate in that postscript, by dedicating my English translation to yourself. You will be surprised to observe that your three corpulent German volumes have collapsed into two English ones, of rather

consumptive appearance. The English climate, you see, does not agree with them; and they have lost flesh as rapidly as Captain le Harnois, in chapter the eighth. We have a story in England, trite enough here, and a sort of philosophic commonplace, like Buridan's ass, but possibly unknown in Germany; and, as it is pertinent to the case between us, I will tell it, the more so as it involves a metaphysical question, and such questions, you know, go up from all parts of Europe, to you people in Germany, as "the courts above." Sir John Cutler had a pair of silk stockings, which his housekeeper, Dolly, darned for a long term of years with worsted; at the end of which time, the last gleam of silk had vanished, and Sir John's *silk* stockings were found to have degenerated into *worsted*. Now, upon this a question arose amongst the metaphysicians, whether Sir John's stockings retained (or, if not, at what precise period they lost) their personal identity. The moralists again were anxious to know, whether Sir John's stockings could be considered the same "accountable" stockings from first to last. The lawyers put the same question in another shape, by demanding whether any felony which Sir John's stockings could be supposed to have committed in youth, might legally be the subject of indictment against the same stockings when superannuated: whether a legacy left to the stockings in their first year, could be claimed by them in their last; and whether the worsted stockings could be sued for the debts of the silk stockings. Some such questions will arise, I apprehend, upon your German "Walladmor," as darned by myself. But here, my good sir, stop a moment. I must not have you interpret the precedent of Sir John and Dolly too strictly. Sir John's stockings were originally of silk, and darned with worsted but don't you conceit *that* to be the case here. No, no

I flatter myself the case between us is just the other way. Your *worsted* stockings it is that I have darned with silk; and the relations which I and Dolly bear to you and Sir John are precisely inverted. What could induce you to dress good St. David in a threadbare suit, it passes my skill to guess — it is enough that I am sure it would give general disgust; and, therefore, I have not only made him a present of a new coat, but have also put a little embroidery upon it. And I really think I shall astonish the good folks in Merionethshire by my account of that saint's festival. In my young days, I wandered much in that beautiful shire, and other shires which lie contiguous; and many a kind thing was done to me in poor men's cottages, which, to my dying day, I shall never be able to repay individually. Hence, as occasions offer, I would seek to make my acknowledgments generally to the country. Upon Penmorfa sands, I once had an interesting adventure — and I have accordingly commemorated Penmorfa. To the little town of Machynleth, I am indebted for various hospitalities; and I think Machynleth will acknowledge itself indebted to me exclusively for its mayor and corporation. Others there are besides, in that neighborhood, both towns and men, that when they shall read *my* St. David's Day, will hardly know whether they are standing on their head or their heels. As to the Bishop of Bangor, of those same days, I owed his Lordship no particular favor, and, therefore, you will observe, I have now taken my vengeance on that see for ever, by making it do suit and service to the house of Walladmor. But enough of St. David's Day. There are some other little changes which I have been obliged to make, in deference to the taste of this country. In the case of Captain le Harnois, it appears to me that, from imperfect knowledge of the English language, you have

confounded the words "sailor" and "tailor;" for you make the Captain talk very much like the latter. There is, however, a great deal of difference in the habits of the two animals, according to our English naturalists; and, therefore, I have retouched the Captain, and curled his whiskers. I have also taken the liberty of curing Miss Walladmor of an hysterical affection. What purpose it answered, I believe you would find it hard to say; and I am sure she has enough to bear without that. Your geography, let me tell you, was none of the best, and I have brushed it up myself. Something the public will bear: topographical sins are venial in a romance; and no candid people look very sharply after the hydrography of a novel. But still, my dear sir, it *did* strike me, that the case of a man's swimming on his back from Bristol to the Isle of Anglesea, was a little beyond the privilege granted by the most *maternal* public. No, pardon me, that rather exceeds the public swallow. Besides, it would have exposed us both to illiberal attacks in the *Quarterly Review*, from Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty, your weak point being his strong one; and particularly, because I had taken liberties with Mr. Croker,* who is a colleague and old crony of his. Your chronology, by the way, was also damaged; but that has gone to the watchmaker's, and it is now regulated, so as to go as well as the Horse-Guards. Now, finally, "Mine dear sare," could you not translate me back into German, and darn me as I have darned you? But you must not "sweat" me down in the same ratio that I have "sweated" you; for if you do that, I fear that my "dimensions will become invisible to any thick sight" in Germany, and I shall "present no mark"

*I had called him *Ally Croker*, in allusion to an old joke of Mr. Southey, Mr. Croker having used the word *ally* and *allies* in his poem of 'Talavera,' *more Hibernico*, with the accent on the first syllable

.o the critical enemy. Darn me into two portly volumes; and, then, perhaps, I will translate you back again into English, and darn you with silk so hyperlustrous, that were Dolly and Professor Kant to rise from the dead, Dolly should grow jealous of me, and the professor confess himself more thoroughly puzzled and confounded, as to the matter of personal identity, by the final "Walladmor," than ever he had been by the Cutlerian stockings. *Jusqu' au revoir*, my dear principal, hoping that you will soon invest me with that character, in relation to yourself; and that you will then sign, as it is now *my* turn to sign — Your obedient (but not very *faithful*) Translator.'

It will be observed that, in this dedication, I have not ventured to state the nature of my alterations, in their whole extent. This I could not do in prudence; for, though I should really have made myself a party to a gross fraud upon the public purse, by smuggling into circulation a load of hideous trash, under the momentary attraction of its connection with Sir Walter Scott, (an attraction which might have sold one edition before its nature was discovered) — though I could not do this, and therefore took the only honorable course open to me in so strange a dilemma, — viz. that of substituting a readable, and, at all events, not dull novel, for the abortion I had been betrayed into sanctioning; yet it might too much have repelled readers, if I had frankly stated beforehand, the extent to which I had been compelled to recompose this German hoax. In a postscript, however, when the reader might be supposed to have finished the book, I spoke a little more plainly. And, as there will be some amusement to many readers in what I said — which (owing to the very imperfect publication * of the book) is,

* The system of quack-puffing, applied to books, and above all, the artifice of seducing a reader into the reading of paragraphs which

in reality, nearly 'as good as manuscript' — I shall here quote a part of it: — '"*E quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*," or, to express this Roman proverb by our own homely one — "*You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.*" Certainly it is difficult to do so, and none can speak to that more feelingly than myself: but not impossible, as I hope that *my* "Walladmor" will show compared with the original. This is a point which, on another account, demands a word or two of explanation, as the reader will else find it difficult to understand upon what principle of translation three thick-set German volumes can have shrunk into two English ones of somewhat meagre proportion.' — I then go on to explain, that the German *pseudo-Scott* had chosen *three*, not because his matter naturally extended so far, but on the principle of exact imitation. 'A Scotch novel from the Constable press, and *not* in three volumes, would have been detected *in limine* as a hoax and a counterfeit. Such a novel would be as ominous and prodigious as "double Thebes;" as perverse as drinking a man's health *with two times two*, (which, in fact, would be an insult;) as palpably fraudulent as a subscription of £99 19*s.*, (where it would be clear that some man had pocketed a shilling;) and as contrary to all natural history as that twenty-seven tailors should make either more or fewer than the cube-root of that number. What may be the occult law of the Constable press, which compels it into these three-headed births, might be hard to explain. Mr. Kant himself with

else he would shun, by holding out false expectation in the heading — all this, in common with other literary men, I deem disgraceful to literature. Such practices lower an honorable profession to the level of a mechanic trade. But the system of soliciting public attention by plain unvarnished advertisements — that is rendered indispensable to the publication of a book. That wanting, (as in 'Walladmor,') the book is not published.

all his subtlety, could never make up his mind in his Königsberg lectures on that subject — why it is that no man thinks of presenting a lady with a service of twenty-three cups and saucers, though evidently she is just as likely to have a party of twenty-three people as twenty-four. Nay, if the reader himself were to make such a present to an English grand jury, when the party never *could* be more than twenty-three, he would infallibly order a service of twenty-four, though he must, in his own conscience, be aware that the twenty-fourth cup and saucer was a mere Irish bull, and a disgusting pleonasm; a twenty-fourth grand jury man being as entirely a chimera as the "abstract lord-mayor" of Scriblerus on a 30th of February. Not only *without* a reason therefore, but even *against* reason, people have a superstitious regard to certain numbers; and Mr. Constable has a right to *his* superstition, which, after all, may be the classical one — that *three* happens to be the number of the Graces.'

This compliment, by the way, was delicate enough to merit an acknowledgment from the Constable press. So much then being settled — that, as a *primâ facie* step towards sustaining the hoax, *three* must be the number of the volumes — I then went on to say: — 'But what if there was not time to complete so many volumes so as to appear at the Leipsic Fair? In that case, two men must do what one could not. Yet, as the second man could not possibly know what his leader was about, he must, of necessity, produce his under stratum without the least earthly reference to the upper; his thorough bass without relation to the melodies in the treble. This was awkward; and, to meet the difficulty, it appears to me, that the upper man said to the lower, "Write me a huge heap of speeches upon politics and Welsh genealogy, write me

.oads of rubbish, astrological, cosmological 'and diaboli-cal,' (as Mrs. Malaprop has it:) have these ready. I, meantime, have two characters (Sir Morgan and Mr. Dulberry the Radical) upon whom I can hang all that you write. You make hooks enough — I'll make eyes; and, what between my men and your speeches, my eyes and your hooks, it's odds but we make a very pretty novel." Such I conceive to have been the pleasant arrangement upon which the machinery was worked, so as to fetch up the way before the Michaelmas Fair began. And thus were two (perhaps three) men's labor dovetailed into one German romance. *Aliter non fit, Avite, liber.* When the rest of the rigging was complete, the politics, gene-alogy, astrology, &c., were mounted as "royals" and "sky-scrapers," the ship weighed, and soon after made Leipsic and London under a press of sail.' Then, having protested that this trash was absolutely beyond hope, and that I should have made myself a party to the author's folly or his knavery by translating it, I offered, however, in the case of my reader's complaining of these large retrenchments, to translate the whole for a 'considera-tion;' to cast it upon the complainant's premises, and to shovel it into the coal-cellar, or any more appropriate place. But thus, I explained, did in fact arise the differ-ence in size, as well as quality, between the German and the English 'Walladmor.' And henceforwards I shall think the better of the German author as well as myself so long as I live; of him for an unrivalled artist of sows' ears, and of myself for a very respectable manufacturer of silk purses.

Thus much to account for my omissions; which, however, some readers may facetiously regard, far from needing apology, as my only merits; and *that* would be as cruel as Lessing's suggestion to an author for his table

of errata — 'Apropos of errata, suppose you were to put your whole book into the list of errata.' More candid readers, I am inclined to hope, will blame me for not having made even larger alterations in the book; and *that* would be a flattering critique, as it must presume that I could have improved it; and compliment never wears so delightful an aspect as when it takes the shape of blame. The truth is, I *have* altered; yes, altered and altered, until I became alarmed. The ghost of Sir John Cutler, of Sir John's stockings, of Sir Francis Drake's ship — nay, of Jason's ship, and older ghosts even than these — all illustrating the same perplexing question, began to haunt me. Metaphysical doubts fell upon me, and I came to fear that, if to a new beginning and a new catastrophe, I were to add a new middle, possibly there might come some evil-minded person who might say that I also was a hoaxer, an English hoaxer building upon a German hoaxer. Then I paused. But still I have gone too far; for it is a most delicate operation to take work out of another man's loom and put work in; joinings and sections will sometimes appear; colors will not always match. In general I would request the reader to consider himself indebted to me for anything he may find particularly good; and, in any case, to load my unhappy 'principal' with the blame of everything that is wrong Coming upon any passage which he thinks superlatively bad, let him be assured that I had no hand in it. Should he change his opinion upon it, I may be disposed to reconsider whether I had not some hand in it. This will be the more reasonable in him, as the critics will 'feel it their duty' (oh! of course, 'their duty') to take the very opposite course. However, if he reads German, my German 'Walladmor' is at his service, and he can judge for himself. Not reading German, let him take my word,

when I apply to the English 'Walladmor' the spirit of the old bull: —

> 'Had you seen but these roads before they were made,
> You would lift up your eyes, and bless Marshal Wade.'

Here closed my explanations; but, as a *l'envoy* or *quod bene vortat* to the whole concern, I added something — a *valediction* and an *ave* in the same breath — which, for the sake of the Spenserian allusion, many people will relish; and even yet I pique myself upon it as a felicitous passage. It began with a quotation; and this quotation, as pretty broadly I hinted, was from myself — myself as the reviewer in the *London Magazine*. Thus it was: —

'A friend of mine' (so we all say when we are looking out for some masquerade dress under which to praise ourselves, or to abuse some dear friend,) 'a friend of mine has written a very long review (or analysis rather) of the German "Walladmor," in a literary journal of the metropolis. He concludes with the following passage, which I choose to quote on account of the graceful allusion it contains, partly also because it gives me an opportunity for trying *my* hand at an allusion to the same romantic legend: — "Now, turning back from the hoaxer to the hoax, we shall conclude with this proposition: — All readers of Spenser must know that the true Florimel lost her girdle, which, they will remember, was found by Sir Satyrane, and was adjudged by a whole assemblage of knights to the false Florimel, although it did not quite fi her. She — viz. the snowy or false Florimel —

> "exceedingly did fret;
> And, snatching from his hand half angrily
> The belt again, about her body 'gan it tie.
> Yet nathemore would it her body fit;
> Yet natheless to her, as her due right,
> It yielded was by them that judged it."'
>
> *Faery Queene*, b. iv. c. 5

CHAPTER VI.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

It was, I think, in the month of August, but certainly in the summer season, and certainly in the year 1807, that I first saw this illustrious man, the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and the most comprehensive, in my judgment, that has yet existed amongst men. My knowledge of him as a man of most original genius began about the year 1799. A little before that time, Mr. Wordsworth had published the first edition (in a single volume) of the 'Lyrical Ballads,' at the end or the beginning of which was placed Mr. Coleridge's poem of the 'Ancient Mariner,' as the contribution of an anonymous friend. It would be directing the reader's attention too much to myself, if I were to linger upon this, the greatest event in the unfolding of my own mind. Let me say in one word, that, at a period when neither the one nor the other writer was valued by the public — both having a long warfare to accomplish of contumely and ridicule before they could rise into their present estimation — I found in these poems 'the ray of a new morning,' and an absolute revelation of untrodden worlds, teeming with power and beauty, as yet unsuspected amongst men. I may here mention that, precisely at the same time, Professor Wilson, about the same age as myself, received the same startling and profound impressions from the same

volume. With feelings of reverential interest, so early and so deep, pointing towards two contemporaries, it may be supposed that I inquired eagerly after their names. But these inquiries were self-baffled, the same deep feelings which prompted my curiosity, causing me to recoil from all casual opportunities of pushing the inquiry, as too generally lying amongst those who gave no sign of participating in my feelings; and, extravagant as it may seem, I revolted with as much hatred from coupling my question with any occasion of insult to the persons whom it respected, as a primitive Christian from throwing frankincense upon the altars of Cæsar, or a lover from giving up the name of his beloved to the coarse license of a Bacchanalian party. It is laughable to record for how long a period my curiosity in this particular was self-defeated. Two years passed before I ascertained the two names. Mr. Wordsworth published *his* in the second and enlarged edition of the work; and for Mr. Coleridge's I was 'indebted' to a private source; but I discharged that debt ill, for I quarrelled with my informant for what I considered his profane way of dealing with a subject so hallowed in my own thoughts. After this I searched east and west, north and south, for all known works or fragments of the same authors. I had read, therefore, as respects Mr. Coleridge, the Allegory which he contributed to Mr. Southey's Joan of Arc. I had read his fine Ode, entitled *France*, his Ode to the Duchess of Devonshire, and various other contributions, more or less interesting, to the two volumes of the 'Anthology,' published at Bristol, about 1799–1800, by Mr. Southey; and, finally, I had of course, read the small volume of poems which passed under his name: these, however, as a juvenile and immature work, had in general greatly disappointed me.

Meantime, it had crowned the interest which to me invested his name — that about the year 1804 or 1805, I had been informed by a gentleman from the English lakes, who knew him as a neighbor, that he had for some time applied his whole mind to metaphysics and psychology — which happened to be my own absorbing pursuit. From 1803 to 1808, I was a student at Oxford; and on the first occasion, when I could conveniently have sought for a personal knowledge of one whom I contemplated with so much admiration, I was met by a disgusting assurance that he had quitted England, and was then residing at Malta in the quality of secretary (and occasionally as treasurer) to the Governor. I began to inquire about the best route to Malta; but, as any route at that time promised an inside place in a French prison, I reconciled myself to waiting; and at last, happening to visit a relative at the Bristol Hot-wells, in the summer of 1807, I had the pleasure to hear that Mr. Coleridge was not only once more upon English ground, but within forty and odd miles of my own station. In that same hour I mounted and bent my way to the south; and before evening reaching a ferry on the river Bridgewater, at a village called, I think, Stogursey, (*i. e.* Stoke de Courcy, by way of distinction from some other Stoke.) I crossed it, and a few miles further attained my object, viz. the little town of Nether Stowey, amongst the Quantock hills. Here I had been assured that I should find Mr. Coleridge, at the house of his old friend Mr. Poole. On presenting myself, however, to that gentleman, I found that Coleridge was absent at Lord Egmont's, an elder brother (by the father's side) of Mr. Percival the minister, assassinated five years after; and as it was doubtful whether he might not then be on the wing to another friend's in the town of Bridgewater, I consented willingly, until his motions

should be ascertained, to stay a day or two with this Mr. Poole, — a man on his own account well deserving a separate notice; for, as Coleridge afterwards remarked to me, he was almost an ideal model for a useful member of Parliament. He was a stout, plain-looking farmer, leading a bachelor life, in a rustic old-fashioned house; the house, however, upon further acquaintance, proving to be amply furnished with modern luxuries, and especially with a good library, superbly mounted in all departments bearing at all upon political philosophy; and the farmer turning out a polished and liberal Englishman, who had travelled extensively, and had so entirely dedicated himself to the service of his humble fellow-countrymen, the hewers of wood and drawers of water in this southern region of Somersetshire, that for many miles round he was the general arbiter of their disputes, the guide and counsellor of their daily lives; besides being appointed executor and guardian to his children by every third man who died in or about the town of Nether Stowey.

The first morning of my visit, Mr. Poole was so kind as to propose, knowing my admiration of Wordsworth, that we should ride over to Alfoxton, — a place of singular interest to myself, as having been occupied in his unmarried days by that poet, during the minority of Mr. St. Aubyn, its present youthful proprietor. At this delightful spot, the ancient residence of an ancient English family and surrounded by those ferny Quantock hills which are so beautifully sketched in the poem of *Ruth*, Wordsworth, accompanied by his sister, had passed the whole of the interval between leaving the University (Cambridge), and the period of his final settlement amongst his native lakes of Westmoreland, except only one year spent in France, some months in North Germany, and a space, I know no how long, spent at Race Down in Dorsetshire.

Returning late from this interesting survey, we found ourselves without company at dinner; and, being thus seated *tête-à-tête*, Mr. Poole propounded the following question to me, which I mention, because it furnished me with the first hint of a singular infirmity besetting Coleridge's mind: — 'Pray, my young friend, did you ever form any opinion, or rather — did it ever happen to you to meet with any rational opinion or conjecture of others, upon that most irrational dogma of Pythagoras about beans? You know what I mean: that monstrous doctrine in which he asserts that a man might as well, for the wickedness of the thing, eat his own grandmother as meddle with beans.' 'Yes,' I replied: 'the line is in the Golden Verses. I remember it well.'

P. — 'True: now our dear excellent friend Coleridge, than whom God never made a creature more divinely endowed, yet strange it is to say, sometimes steals from other people, just as you or I might do; I beg your pardon — just as a poor creature like myself might do, that sometimes have not wherewithal to make a figure from my own exchequer: and the other day, at a dinner-party, this question arising about Pythagoras and his beans, Coleridge gave us an interpretation, which, from his manner, I suspect to have been not original. Think, therefore, if you have anywhere read a plausible solution.'

'I have: and it was in a German author. This German, understand, is a poor stick of a man, not to be named on the same day with Coleridge: so that, if it should appear that Coleridge has robbed him, be assured that he has done the scamp too much honor.'

P. — 'Well: what says the German?'

'Why, you know the use made in Greece of beans in voting and balloting? Well: the German says that

Pythagoras speaks symbolically; meaning that electioneering, or, more generally, all interference with political intrigues, is fatal to a philosopher's pursuits and their appropriate serenity. Therefore, says he, follower of mine, abstain from public affairs as you would from parricide.'

P. — 'Well then, Coleridge *has* done the scamp too much honor: for, by Jove, that is the very explanation he gave us!'

Here was a trait of Coleridge's mind, to be first made known to me by his best friend, and first published to the world by me, the foremost of his admirers! But both of us had sufficient reasons: — Mr. Poole knew that, stumbled on by accident, such a discovery would be likely to impress upon a man as yet unacquainted with Coleridge a most injurious jealousy with regard to all he might write; whereas, frankly avowed by one who knew him best, the fact was disarmed of its sting; since it thus became evident that where the case had been best known and most investigated, it had not operated to his serious disadvantage. On the same argument, to forestall, that is to say, other discoverers who would make a more unfriendly use of the discovery, and also, as matters of literary curiosity, I shall here point out a few of Coleridge's unacknowledged obligations, detected by myself in a very wide course of reading.[2]

1. The hymn to Chamouni is an expansion of a short poem in stanzas, upon the same subject, by Frederica Brun, a female poet of Germany, previously known to the world under her maiden name of Münter. The mere framework of the poem is exactly the same, — an appeal to the most impressive features of the regal mountain, (Mont Blanc,) citing them to proclaim their author: the torrent, for instance, is required to say, by whom it had

been arrested in its headlong ravings, and stiffened, as by the petrific mace of Death, into everlasting pillars of ice; and the answer to these impassioned apostrophes is made by the same choral burst of rapture. In mere logic, therefore, and even as to the choice of circumstances, Coleridge's poem is a translation. On the other hand, by a judicious amplification of some topics, and by its far deeper tone of lyrical enthusiasm, the dry bones of the German outline have been created by Coleridge into the fulness of life. It is not, therefore, a paraphrase, but a recast of the original. And how was this calculated, if frankly avowed, to do Coleridge any injury with the judicious?

2. A more singular case of Coleridge's infirmity is this: — In a very noble passage of 'France' a fine expression or two occur from 'Samson Agonistes.' Now to take a phrase or an inspiriting line from the great fathers of poetry, even though no marks of quotation should be added, carries with it no charge of plagiarism. Milton is presumed to be as familiar to the ear as nature to the eye; and to steal from him as impossible as to appropriate, or sequester to a private use, some 'bright particular star.' And there is a good reason for rejecting the typographical marks of quotation: they break the continuity of the passion, by reminding the reader of a printed book; on which account Milton himself, (to give an instance,) has not marked the sublime words, 'tormented all the air,' as borrowed; nor has Wordsworth, in applying to an unprincipled woman of commanding beauty the memorable expression, 'a weed of glorious feature,' thought it necessary to acknowledge it as originally belonging to Spenser. Some dozens of similar cases might be adduced from Milton. But Mr. Coleridge, in describing France as

'Her footsteps insupportably advancing,'

not satisfied with omitting the marks of acknowledgment, thought fit positively to deny that he was indebted to Milton. Yet who could forget that semi-chorus in the 'Samson,' where the 'bold Ascalonite' is described as having 'fled from his lion ramp?' Or who, that was not in this point liable to some hallucination of judgment, would have ventured on a public challenge (for virtually it was that) to produce from the 'Samson,' words so impossible to be overlooked as those of 'insupportably advancing the footsteps?' The result, as I remember, was, that one of the critical journals placed the two passages in juxta-position, and left the reader to his own conclusions with regard to the poet's veracity. But in this instance, it was common sense rather than veracity which the facts impeach.

3. In the year 1810 I happened to be amusing myself, by reading, in their chronological order, the great classical circumnavigations of the earth; and, coming to Shelvocke, I met with a passage to this effect: — That Hatley, his second captain, (*i. e.* lieutenant,) being a melancholy man, was possessed by a fancy that some long season of foul weather was due to an albatross which had steadily pursued the ship; upon which he shot the bird, but without mending their condition. There at once I saw the germ of the 'Ancient Mariner;' and I put a question to Coleridge accordingly. Could it have been imagined that he would see cause utterly to disown so slight an obligation to Shelvocke? Wordsworth, a man of stern veracity, on hearing of this, professed his inability to understand Coleridge's meaning; the fact being notorious, as he told me, that Coleridge had derived, from the very passage I had cited, the original hint for the action of the poem; though it is very possible, from something which Coleridge said, on another occasion, that,

before meeting a fable in which to embody his ideas, he had meditated a poem on delirium, confounding its own dream scenery with external things, and connected with the imagery of high latitudes.

4. All these cases amount to nothing at all as cases of plagiarism, and for that reason expose the more conspicuously that obliquity of feeling which could seek to decline the very slight acknowledgments required. But now I come to a case of real and palpable plagiarism; yet that too of a nature to be quite unaccountable in a man of Coleridge's attainments. It is not very likely, that this particular case will soon be detected; but others will. Yet who knows? Eight hundred or a thousand years hence, some cursed reviewer may arise, who having read the *Biographia Literaria* of Coleridge, will afterwards read the Miscellaneous Philosophical Essays * of Schelling, the great Bavarian professor — a man in some respects worthy to be Coleridge's assessor; and he will then make a singular discovery. In the 'Biographia Literaria' occurs a dissertation upon the reciprocal relations of the *Esse* and the *Cogitare;* and an attempt is made, by inverting the postulates from which the argument starts, to show how each might arise as a product, by an intelligible genesis, from the other. It is a subject, which, since the time of Fichte, has much occupied the German metaphysicians; and many thousands of essays have been written on it, of which many hundreds have been read by many tens of persons. Coleridge's essay, in particular, is prefaced by a few words, in which, aware of his coincidence with Schelling, he declares his willingness to acknowledge himself in-

* I forget the exact title, not having seen the book since 1823, and then only for one day; but I believe it was *Schelling's Kleine Philosophische Werke.*

debted to so great a man, in any case where the truth would allow him to do so; but in this particular case, insisting on the impossibility that he could have borrowed arguments which he had first seen some years after he had thought out the whole hypothesis *proprio marte*. After this, what was my astonishment, to find that the entire essay from the first word to the last, is a *verbatim* translation from Schelling, with no attempt in a single instance to appropriate the paper, by developing the arguments or by diversifying the illustrations! Some other obligations to Schelling of a slighter kind, I have met with in the *Biographia Literaria;* but this was a barefaced plagiarism, which could in prudence have been risked only by relying too much upon the slight knowledge of German literature in this country, and especially of that section of the German literature. Had then Coleridge any need to borrow from Schelling? Did he borrow *in forma pauperis*? Not at all: — there lay the wonder. He spun daily and at all hours, for mere amusement of his own activities, and from the loom of his own magical brain, theories more gorgeous by far, and supported by a pomp and luxury of images, such as Schelling — no, nor any German that ever breathed, not John Paul — could have emulated in his dreams. With the riches of El Dorado lying about him, he would condescend to filch a handful of gold from any man whose purse he fancied; and in fact reproduced in a new form, applying itself to intellectual wealth, that maniacal propensity which is sometimes well known to attack enormous proprietors and *millionaires* for acts of petty larceny. The last Duke of Anc—— could not abstain from exercising his furtive mania upon articles so humble as silver spoons; and it was the daily care of a pious daughter, watching over the good name of her father, to have his pockets searched by

a confidential valet, and the claimants of the purloined articles traced out.

Many cases have crossed me in life of people, otherwise not wanting in principle, who had habits, or at least hankerings, of the same kind. And the phrenologists, I believe, are well acquainted with the case, its signs, its progress, and its history. Dismissing, however, this subject, which I have at all noticed, only that I might anticipate and (in old English) that I might *prevent* the uncandid interpreter of its meaning, I will assert finally, that, after having read for thirty years in the same track as Coleridge, — that track in which few of any age will ever follow us, such as German metaphysicians, Latin schoolmen, thaumaturgic Platonists, religious Mystics, — and having thus discovered a large variety of trivial thefts, I do, nevertheless, most heartily believe him to have been as entirely original in all his capital pretensions, as any one man that ever has existed; as Archimedes in ancient days, or as Shakspeare in modern. Did the reader ever see Milton's account of the rubbish contained in the Greek and Latin fathers? or did he ever read a statement of the monstrous chaos with which an African Obeah man stuffs his enchanted scarecrows? or, to take a more common illustration, did he ever amuse himself by searching the pockets of a child — three years old, suppose, when buried in slumber after a long summer's day of out-a-door's intense activity? I have done this; and, for the amusement of the child's mother, have analyzed the contents, and drawn up a formal register of the whole. Philosophy is puzzled, conjecture and hypothesis are confounded, in the attempt to explain the law of selection which *can* have presided in the child's labors: stones remarkable only for weight, old rusty hinges, nails, crooked skewers, stolen when the cook had

turned her back, rags, broken glass, tea-cups having the bottom knocked out, and loads of similar jewels, were the prevailing articles in this *procés verbal*. Yet, doubtless, much labor had been incurred, some sense of danger perhaps, had been faced, and the anxieties of a conscious robber endured, in order to amass this splendid treasure. Such in value were the robberies of Coleridge; such their usefulness to himself or anybody else; and such the circumstances of uneasiness under which he had committed them. I return to my narrative.

Two or three days had slipped away in waiting for Coleridge's re-appearance at Nether Stowey, when suddenly Lord Egmont called upon Mr. Poole, with a present for Coleridge; it was a canister of peculiarly fine snuff, which Coleridge now took profusely. Lord Egmont, on this occasion, spoke of Coleridge in the terms of excessive admiration, and urged Mr. Poole to put him upon undertaking some great monumental work, that might furnish a sufficient arena for the display of his various and rare accomplishments; for his multiform erudition on the one hand, for his splendid power of theorizing and combining large and remote notices of facts on the other. And he suggested, judiciously enough, as one theme which offered a field at once large enough and indefinite enough to suit a mind that could not show its full compass of power, unless upon very plastic materials — a History of Christianity, in its progress and in its chief divarications into Church and Sect, with a continual reference to the relations subsisting between Christianity and the current philosophy; their occasional connections or approaches, and their constant mutual repulsions. 'But, at any rate, let him do something,' said Lord Egmont; 'for at present he talks very much like an angel, and he does nothing at all.' Lord Egmont, I understood from every

body to be a truly good and benevolent man; and, on this occasion, he spoke with an earnestness which agreed with my previous impression. Coleridge, he said, was now at the prime of his powers — uniting something of youthful vigor, with sufficient experience of life; with the benefit beside of vast meditation, and of reading unusually discursive. No man had ever been better qualified to revive the heroic period of literature in England, and to give a character of weight to the philosophic erudition of the country upon the Continent. 'And what a pity,' he added, 'if this man were, after all, to vanish like an apparition; and you, I, and a few others, who have witnessed his grand *bravuras* of display, were to have the usual fortune of ghost-seers, in meeting no credit for any statements that we might vouch on his behalf!'

To pursue my narrative. It now appeared that Lord Egmont's carriage had, some days before, conveyed Coleridge to Bridgewater, with a purpose of staying one single day at that place, and then returning to Mr. Poole's. From the sort of laugh with which Lord Egmont taxed his own simplicity, in having confided at all in the stability of any Coleridgian plan, I now gathered that procrastination in excess, was, or had become, a marked feature in Coleridge's daily life. Nobody who knew him ever thought of depending on any appointment he might make; spite of his uniformly honorable intentions, nobody attached any weight to his assurances *in re futura*: those who asked him to dinner or any other party, as a matter of course sent a carriage for him, and went personally or by proxy to fetch him; and, as to letters, unless the address were in some female hand that commanded his affectionate esteem, he tossed them all into one general *dead-letter bureau*, and rarely, I believe, opened them at all. Bourrienne mentions a mode of abridging the trouble

attached to a very extensive correspondence, by which infinite labor was saved to himself and to Bonaparte, when commanding in Italy. Nine out of ten letters, supposing them letters of business with official applications of a special kind, he contends, answer themselves: in other words, time alone must soon produce events which virtually contain the answer. On this principle the letters were opened periodically, after intervals, suppose of six weeks; and, at the end of that time, it was found that not many remained to require any further more particular answer. Coleridge's plan, however, was shorter; he opened none, I understood, and answered none. At least such was his habit at that time. But on that same day, all this, which I heard now for the first time, and with much concern, was fully explained: for already he was under the full dominion of opium, as he himself revealed to me, and with a deep expression of horror at the hideous bondage, in a private walk of some length, which I took with him about sunset.

Lord Egmont's information, and the knowledge now gained of Coleridge's habits, making it very uncertain when I might see him in my present hospitable quarters, I immediately took my leave of Mr. Poole, and went over to Bridgewater. I had received directions for finding out the house where Coleridge was visiting; and, in riding down a main street of Bridgewater, I noticed a gateway corresponding to the description given me. Under this was standing, and gazing about him, a man whom I shall describe. In height he might seem to be about five feet eight; (he was, in reality, about an inch and a half taller, but his figure was of an order which drowns the height;) his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with

black hair; his eyes were large and soft in their expression; and it was from the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess, which mixed with their light, that I recognized my object. This was Coleridge. I examined him steadfastly for a minute or more; and it struck me that he saw neither myself nor any other object in the street. He was in a deep reverie; for I had dismounted, made two or three trifling arrangements at an inn door, and advanced close to him, before he had apparently become conscious of my presence. The sound of my voice, announcing my own name, first awoke him: he started, and for a moment seemed at a loss to understand my purpose or his own situation; for he repeated rapidly a number of words which had no relation to either of us. There was no *mauvaise honte* in his manner, but simple perplexity, and an apparent difficulty in recovering his position amongst daylight realities. This little scene over, he received me with a kindness of manner so marked, that it might be called gracious. The hospitable family with whom he was domesticated, were distinguished for their amiable manners and enlightened understandings; they were descendants from Chubb, the philosophic writer, and bore the same name. For Coleridge, they all testified deep affection and esteem — sentiments in which the whole town of Bridgewater seemed to share; for in the evening, when the heat of the day had declined, I walked out with him; and rarely, perhaps never, have I seen a person so much interrupted in one hour's space as Coleridge, on this occasion, by the courteous attentions of young and old.

All the people of station and weight in the place, and apparently all the ladies, were abroad to enjoy the lovely summer evening; and not a party passed without some mark of smiling recognition; and the majority stopping

to make personal inquiries about his health, and to express their anxiety that he should make a lengthened stay amongst them. Certain I am, from the lively esteem expressed towards Coleridge, at this time, by the people of Bridgewater, that a very large subscription might in that town have been raised to support him amongst them, in the character of a lecturer, or philosophical professor. Especially, I remarked, that the young men of the place manifested the most liberal interest in all that concerned him; and I can add my attestation to that of Mr. Coleridge himself, when describing an evening spent amongst the enlightened tradesmen of Birmingham, that nowhere is more unaffected good sense exhibited, and particularly nowhere more elasticity and *freshness* of mind, than in the conversation of the reading men in manufacturing towns. In Kendal, especially, in Bridgewater, and in Manchester, I have witnessed more interesting conversations, as much information, and more natural eloquence in conveying it than usually in literary cities, or in places professedly learned. One reason for this is, that in trading towns the time is more happily distributed; the day given to business, and active duties — the evening to relaxation; on which account, books, conversation, and literary leisure are more cordially enjoyed: the same satiation never can take place, which too frequently deadens the genial enjoyment of those who have a surfeit of books, and a monotony of leisure. Another reason is, that more simplicity of manner may be expected, and a more natural picturesqueness of conversation, more open expression of character in places, where people have no previous name to support. Men, in trading towns, are not afraid to open their lips, for fear they should disappoint your expectations, nor do they strain for showy sentiments, that they may meet them. Bu-

elsewhere, many are the men who stand in awe of their own reputation: not a word which is unstudied, not a movement in the spirit of natural freedom, dare they give way to; because it might happen that on review something would be seen to retract or to qualify — something not properly planned and chiselled, to build into the general architecture of an artificial reputation. But to return: —

Coleridge led me to a drawing-room, rang the bell for refreshments, and omitted no point of a courteous reception. He told me that there would be a very large dinner party on that day, which, perhaps, might be disagreeable to a perfect stranger; but, if not, he could assure me of a most hospitable welcome from the family. I was too anxious to see him under all aspects, to think of declining this invitation. And these little points of business being settled — Coleridge, like some great river, the Orellana, or the St. Lawrence, that had been checked and fretted by rocks or thwarting islands, and suddenly recovers its volume of waters, and its mighty music — swept at once, as if returning to his natural business, into a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation, certainly the most novel, the most finely illustrated, and traversing the most spacious fields of thought, by transitions the most just and logical, that it was possible to conceive. What I mean by saying that his transitions were 'just,' is by way of contradistinction to that mode of conversation which courts variety by means of *verbal* connections. Coleridge, to many people, and often I have heard the complaint, seemed to wander; and he seemed then to wander the most, when in fact his resistance to the wandering instinct was greatest, — viz. when the compass, and huge circuit, by which his illustrations moved, travelled farthest into remote regions, before they began to revolve. Long

before this coming-round commenced, most people had lost him, and naturally enough supposed that he had lost himself. They continued to admire the separate beauty of the thoughts, but did not see their relations to the dominant theme. Had the conversation been thrown upon paper, it might have been easy to trace the continuity of the links: just as in Bishop Berkeley's Siris,* from a pedestal so low and abject, so culinary, as Tar Water, the method of preparing it, and its medicinal effects, the dissertation ascends, like Jacob's ladder, by just gradations, into the Heaven of Heavens, and the thrones of the Trinity. But Heaven is there connected with earth by the Homeric chain of gold; and being subject to steady examination, it is easy to trace the links. Whereas, in conversation, the loss of a single word may cause the whole cohesion to disappear from view. However, I can assert, upon my long and intimate knowledge of Coleridge's mind, that logic, the most severe, was as inalienable from his modes of thinking, as grammar from his language.

On the present occasion, the original theme, started by myself, was Hartley, and the Hartleian theory. I had carried, as a little present to Coleridge, a scarce Latin pamphlet, *De Ideis*, written by Hartley, about 1746, that is, about three years earlier than the publication of his great work. He had also preluded to this great work, in a little English medical tract upon Joanna Stephens's medicine for the stone; for indeed Hartley was the person upon whose evidence the House of Commons had mainly relied in giving to that same Joanna a reward of £5000 for her idle medicines — an application of public money

* *Sciris* ought to have been the title, *i. e.* Σειρις, a chain; from this defect in the orthography, I did not in my boyish days perceive, nor could obtain any light upon its meaning.

not without its use, in so far as it engaged men by selfish motives to cultivate the public service, and to attempt public problems of very difficult solution; but else, in that particular instance, perfectly idle, as the groans of three generations since Joanna's era have too feelingly established. It is known to most literary people that Coleridge was, in early life, so passionate an admirer of the Hartleian philosophy, that 'Hartley' was the sole baptismal name which he gave to his eldest child; and in an early poem, entitled 'Religious Musings,' he has characterized Hartley as —

> —— 'Him,
> Wisest of men, who saw the mimic trains
> Pass in fine surges to the sentient brain.'

But at present, (August, 1807,) all this was a forgotten thing. Coleridge was so profoundly ashamed of the shallow Unitarianism of Hartley, and so disgusted to think that he could at any time have countenanced that creed, that he would scarcely allow to Hartley the reverence which is undoubtedly his due: for I must contend that, waiving all question of the extent to which Hartley would have pushed it, (as though the law of association accounted not only for our complex pleasures and pains, but also might be made to explain the act of ratiocination,) waiving also the physical substratum of nervous vibrations and miniature vibrations, to which he has chosen to marry his theory of association: — all this apart, I must contend that the 'Essay on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations,' stands forward as a specimen almost unique of elaborate theorizing, and a monument of absolute beauty, in the perfection of its *dialectic* ability. In this respect it has, to my mind, the spotless beauty, and the ideal proportions of some Grecian statue. However, I

confess, that being myself, from my earliest years, a reverential believer in the doctrine of the Trinity, simply because I never attempted to bring all things within the mechanic understanding, and because, like Sir Thomas Browne, my mind almost demanded mysteries, in so mysterious a system of relations as those which connect us with another world, and also because the farther my understanding opened, the more I perceived of dim analogies to strengthen my creed; and because nature herself, mere physical nature, has mysteries no less profound; and because the simplest doctrine of motion rests upon an ultimate fact, which all the wisdom of the schools will never explain; and because that vulgar puzzle of Achilles and the Tortoise never was and never will be cleared up; * and, finally, because I had begun to suspect (what afterwards Coleridge more fully convinced me of) that the unity demanded by the *soi-disant* Unitarian is a chimera and a total blunder, — being, in fact, not unity, but what the schoolmen call *unicity;* for, as they insist, without previous multitude (meaning by multitude simply

* So cleared up, I mean, as to make it other than a mystery. Else, in a sense which, leaving a great mystery behind, clears it of contradiction, it was solved satisfactorily to my mind by Mr. Coleridge — I believe in print; but at any rate in conversation. I had remarked to him that the 'sophism,' as it is usually called, but the difficulty as it should be called, of Achilles and the Tortoise, which had puzzled all the sages of Greece, was, in fact, merely another form of the perplexity which besets decimal fractions — that, for example, if you throw $\frac{2}{3}$ into a decimal form, it will never terminate, but be .666666, &c., *ad infinitum.* 'Yes,' Coleridge replied: 'the apparent absurdity in the Grecian problem arises thus — because it assumes the infinite divisibility of *space*, but drops out of view the corresponding infinity of *time.*' There was a flash of lightning, which illuminated a darkness that had existed for twenty-three centuries!

plurality) there can be no proper unity; for, else, where is the *union* — where is the *To unitum?*

For these and for many other '*becauses*,' I could not reconcile, with my general reverence for Mr. Coleridge, the fact so often reported to me, that he was a Unitarian. A Unitarian, I often exclaimed, and a philosopher! Nay, it cannot be denied, the profoundest of philosophers! and one destined to sound the intellectual depths, and the depths below depths, beyond any other of the children of men. But, said some Bristol people to me, not only is he a Unitarian — he is also a Socinian. In that case, I replied, I cannot hold him a Christian. I am a liberal man, and have no bigotry or hostile feelings towards a Socinian; but I can never think that man a Christian, who has blotted out of his scheme the very powers by which only the great offices and functions of Christianity can be sustained; neither can I think that any man, though he may make himself a marvellously clever disputant, ever could tower upwards into a very great philosopher, unless he should begin or should end with Christianity. Kant is a dubious exception. Not that I mean to question his august pretensions, so far as they went, and in his proper line. Within his own circle none durst tread but he. But that circle was limited. He was called, by one who weighed him well, the *alles-zermalmender*, the world-shattering Kant. He could destroy — his intellect was essentially destructive. He was the Gog and he was the Magog of Hunnish desolation to the existing schemes of philosophy. He probed them; he showed the vanity of vanities which besieged their foundations, — the rottenness below, the hollowness above. But he had no instincts of creation or restoration within his Apollyon mind; for he had no love, no faith, no self-distrust, no humility, no childlike docility; all which

qualities belonged essentially to Coleridge's mind, and waited only for manhood and for sorrow to bring them forward.

Who can read without indignation of Kant, that, at his own table, in social sincerity and confidential talk, let him say what he would in his books, he exulted in the prospect of absolute and ultimate annihilation; that he planted his glory in the grave, and was ambitious of rotting for ever! The King of Prussia, though a personal friend of Kant's, found himself obliged to level his state thunders at some of his doctrines, and terrified him in his advance; else, I am persuaded that Kant would have formally delivered Atheism from the Professor's chair, and would have enthroned the horrid Ghoulish creed, which privately he professed, in the University of Königsberg. It required the artillery of a great King to make him pause. The fact is, that as the stomach has been known, by means of its natural secretion, to attack not only whatsoever alien body is introduced within it, but also (as John Hunter first showed) sometimes to attack itself and its own organic structure; so, and with the same preternatural extension of instinct, did Kant carry forward his destroying functions, until he turned them upon his own hopes and the pledges of his own superiority to the dog — the ape — the worm. But '*exoriare aliquis*,' — and some philosopher, I am persuaded, *will* yet arise; and 'one sling of some victorious arm' (Paradise Lost, b. X.) will yet destroy the destroyer, in so far as he has applied himself to the destruction of Christian hope. For my faith is, that, though a great man may, by a rare possibility, be an infidel, an intellect of the highest order must build upon Christianity. A very clever architect may choose to show his power by building with sufficient materials, but the supreme architect must require the

very best; because the perfection of the forms cannot be shown but in the perfection of the matter.

On these accounts I took the liberty of doubting, as often as I heard the reports I have mentioned of Coleridge; and I now found that he disowned most solemnly (and I may say penitentially) whatever had been true in these reports. Coleridge told me that it had cost him a painful effort, but not a moment's hesitation, to abjure his Unitarianism, from the circumstance that he had amongst the Unitarians many friends, to some of whom he was greatly indebted for kind offices. In particular he mentioned Mr. Estlin of Bristol, I believe a dissenting clergyman, as one whom it grieved him to grieve. But he would not dissemble his altered views. I will add, at the risk of appearing to dwell too long on religious topics, that on this my first introduction to Coleridge, he reverted with strong compunction to a sentiment which he had expressed in earlier days, upon prayer. In one of his youthful poems, speaking of God, he had said, —

> ——— 'Of whose all-seeing eye
> Aught to demand were impotence of mind.'

This sentiment he now so utterly condemned, that, on the contrary, he told me, as his own peculiar opinion, that the act of praying was the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable; praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties; and the great mass of worldly men and of learned men, he pronounced absolutely incapable of prayer.

For about three hours he had continued to talk, and in the course of this performance he had delivered many most striking aphorisms, embalming more weight of truth, and separately more deserving to be themselves embalmed than any that are on record. In the midst of our con-

versation, if that can be called conversation which I so seldom sought to interrupt, and which did not often leave openings for contribution, the door opened, and a lady entered. She was in person full and rather below the common height: whilst her face showed, to my eye, some prettiness of rather a commonplace order. Coleridge turned, upon her entrance: his features, however, announced no particular complacency, and did not relax into a smile. In a frigid tone he said, whilst turning to me, 'Mrs. Coleridge:' in some slight way he then presented me to her: I bowed; and the lady almost immediately retired. From this short, but ungenial scene, I gathered, what I afterward learned redundantly, that Coleridge's marriage had not been a very happy one. But let not the reader misunderstand me. Never was there a baser insinuation, viler in the motive, or more ignoble in the manner, than that passage in some lampoon of Lord Byron's, where, by way of vengeance on Mr. Southey, (who was the sole delinquent,) he described both him and Coleridge as having married 'two milliners from Bath.' Everybody knows what is *meant* to be conveyed in that expression, though it would be hard indeed, if, even at Bath, there should be any class under such a fatal curse, condemned so irretrievably, and so hopelessly prejudged — that ignominy must, at any rate, attach, in virtue of a mere name or designation, to the mode by which they gained their daily bread, or possibly supported the declining years of a parent. However, in this case, the whole sting of the libel was a pure falsehood of Lord Byron's. Bath was not the native city, nor at any time the residence of the ladies in question, but Bristol. As to the other word, '*milliners*,' that is not worth inquiring about. Whether they, or any one of their family, ever *did* exercise this profession, I do not know: they were at

all events too young, when removed by marriage from Bristol, to have been much tainted by the worldly feelings which may beset such a mode of life. But what is more to the purpose, I heard at this time in Bristol, from Mr. Cottle the author, a man of high principle, from his accomplished sisters, from the ladies who had succeeded Mrs. Hannah More in her school, and who enjoyed her entire confidence, as well as from other most respectable residents at Bristol, who had passed their lives in that city, that the whole family of four or five sisters had maintained an irreproachable character, though naturally exposed by their personal attractions to some peril, and to the malevolence of envy. This declaration, which I could strengthen by other testimony equally disinterested, if it were at all necessary, I owe to truth; and I must also add, upon a knowledge more personal, that Mrs. Coleridge was, in all circumstances of her married life, a virtuous wife, and a conscientious mother; and as a mother, she showed at times a most meritorious energy: in particular, I remember that, wishing her daughter to acquire the Italian language, and having, in her retirement at Keswick, no means of obtaining a master, she set to work resolutely under Mr. Southey's guidance, to learn the language herself at a time of life when such attainments are not made with ease or pleasure: she became mistress of the language in a very respectable extent and then communicated her new accomplishment to her interesting daughter.

Meantime, I, for my part, owe Mrs. Coleridge no particular civility: and I see no reason why I should mystify the account of Coleridge's life or habits, by dissembling what is notorious to so many thousands of people. An insult once offered by Mrs. Coleridge to a female relative of my own, as much superior to Mrs. Coleridge in the

spirit of courtesy and kindness, which ought to preside in the intercourse between females, as she was in the splendor of her beauty, would have given me a dispensation from all terms of consideration beyond the restraints of strict justice. My offence was — the having procrastinated in some trifling affair of returning a volume, or a MS.; and during my absence at a distance of four or five hundred miles, Mrs. Coleridge thought fit to write a letter, filled with the most intemperate expressions of anger, addressed to one whom she did not know by sight, and who could in no way be answerable for my delinquencies. I go on, therefore, to say, that Coleridge afterwards made me, as doubtless some others, a confidant in this particular. What he had to complain of, was simply incompatibility of temper and disposition. Wanting all cordial admiration, or indeed comprehension of her husband's intellectual powers, Mrs. Coleridge wanted the original basis for affectionate patience and candor. Hearing from everybody that Coleridge was a man of most extraordinary endowments, and attaching little weight, perhaps, to the distinction between popular talents, and such as by their very nature are doomed to a slower progress in the public esteem, she naturally looked to see at least an ordinary measure of worldly consequence attend upon their exercise.

Now had poor Coleridge been as persevering and punctual as the great mass of professional men, and had he given no reason to throw the *onus* of the different result upon his own different habits, — in that case this result might, possibly and eventually, have been set down to the peculiar constitution of his powers, and their essential non-popularity in the English market. But this trial having never fairly been made, it was natural to impute his non-success exclusively to his own irregular application,

and his carelessness in forming judicious connections. In circumstances such as these, however, no matter how caused, or how palliated, was laid a sure ground of discontent and fretfulness in any woman's mind, not unusually indulgent, or unusually magnanimous. Coleridge, besides, assured me that his marriage was not his own deliberate act; but was in a manner forced upon his sense of honor, by the scrupulous Southey, who insisted that he had gone too far in his attentions to Miss Fricker, for any honorable retreat. On the other hand, a neutral spectator of the parties protested to me, that if ever in his life he had seen a man under deep fascination, and what he would have called desperately in love. Coleridge, in relation to Miss Fricker, was that man. Be that as it might, circumstances occurred soon after the marriage, which placed all the parties in a trying situation for ther candor and good temper. I had a full outline of the situation from two of those who were chiefly interested, and a partial one from a third: nor can it be denied that all the parties offended in point of prudence. A young lady became a neighbor, and a daily companion of Coleridge's walks, whom I will not describe more particularly, than by saying that intellectually she was very much superior to Mrs. Coleridge. That superiority alone, when made conspicuous by its effect in winning Coleridge's regard and society, could not but be deeply mortifying to a young wife. However, it was moderated to her feelings by two considerations, — 1st, That the young lady was much too kind-hearted to have designed any annoyance in this triumph, or to express any exultation; 2d, That no shadow of suspicion settled upon the moral conduct or motives of either party: the young lady was always attended by her brother: she had no personal charms; and it was manifest that mere intellectual sympathies, in reference

to literature and natural scenery, had associated them in their daily walks.

Still it is a bitter trial to a young married woman to sustain any sort of competition with a female of her own age, for any part of her husband's regard, or any share of his company. Mrs. Coleridge, not having the same relish for long walks or rural scenery, and their residence being, at this time, in a very sequestered village, was condemned to a daily renewal of this trial. Accidents of another kind embittered it still further: often it would happen that the walking party returned drenched with rain; in which case the young lady, with a laughing gayety, and evidently unconscious of any liberty that she was taking, or any wound that she was inflicting, would run up to Mrs. Coleridge's wardrobe, array herself, without leave asked, in Mrs. Coleridge's dresses, and make herself merry with her own uncerimoniousness and Mrs. Coleridge's gravity. In all this, she took no liberty that she would not most readily have granted in return; she confided too unthinkingly in what she regarded as the natural privileges of friendship; and as little thought that she had been receiving or exacting a favor, as, under an exchange of their relative positions, she would have claimed to have conferred one. But Mrs. Coleridge viewed her freedoms with a far different eye: she felt herself no longer the entire mistress of her own house; she held a divided empire; and it barbed the arrow to her womanly feelings, that Coleridge treated any sallies of resentment which might sometimes escape her, as narrow-mindedness; whilst, on the other hand, her own female servant, and others, in the same rank of life, began to drop expressions, which alternately implied pity for her as an injured woman, or sneered at her as a very tame one.

The reader will easily apprehend the situation, and the unfortunate results which it boded to the harmony of a young married couple, without further illustration. Whether Coleridge would not, under any circumstances, have become indifferent to a wife not eminently capable of enlightened sympathy with his own ruling pursuits, I shall not undertake to guess. But doubtless this consummation must have been hastened by a situation which exposed Mrs. Coleridge to an invidious comparison with a more intellectual person; as, on the other hand, it was most unfortunate for Coleridge himself, to be continually compared with one so ideally correct and regular in his business habits as Mr. Southey. Thus was their domestic peace prematurely soured: embarrassments of a pecuniary nature would be likely to demand continual sacrifices; no depth of affection existing, these would create disgust or dissension; and at length, each would believe that their union had originated in circumstances overruling their own deliberate choice.

The gloom, however, and the weight of dejection which sat upon Coleridge's countenance and deportment at this time, could not be accounted for by a disappointment, (if such it were,) to which time must, long ago, have reconciled him. Mrs. Coleridge, if not turning to him the more amiable aspects of her character, was, at any rate, a respectable partner. And the season of youth was now passed. They had been married about ten years; had had four children, of whom three survived; and the interests of a father were now replacing those of a husband. Yet never had I beheld so profound an expression of cheerless despondency. And the restless activity of Coleridge's mind in chasing abstract truths, and burying himself in the dark places of human speculation, seemed to me, in a great measure, an attempt to escape out of his

own personal wretchedness. At dinner, when a very numerous party had assembled, he knew that he was expected to talk, and exerted himself to meet the expectation. But he was evidently struggling with gloomy thoughts that prompted him to silence, and perhaps to solitude: he talked with effort; and passively resigned himself to the repeated misrepresentations of several amongst his hearers. It must be to this period of Coleridge's life that Wordsworth refers in those exquisite '*Lines* written in my pocket-copy of the Castle of Indolence.' The passage which I mean comes after a description of Coleridge's countenance, and begins in some such terms as these: —

> 'A piteous sight it was to see this man,
> When he came back to us, a wither'd flow'r,' &c.

Withered he was indeed, and to all appearance blighted. At night he entered into a spontaneous explanation of this unhappy overclouding of his life, on occasion of my saying accidentally that a tooth-ache had obliged me to take a few drops of laudanum. At what time or on what motive he had commenced the use of opium, he did not say; but the peculiar emphasis of horror with which he warned me against forming a habit of the same kind, impressed upon my mind a feeling that he never hoped to liberate himself from the bondage. About ten o'clock at night I took leave of him; and feeling that I could not easily go to sleep after the excitement of the day, and fresh from the sad spectacle of powers so majestic already besieged by decay, I determined to return to Bristol through the coolness of the night. The roads, though, in fact, a section of the great highway between seaports so turbulent as Bristol and Plymouth, were as quiet as garden-walks. Once only I passed through the expiring fires of a village fair or wake: that interruption

excepted, through the whole stretch of forty miles from Bridgewater to the Hot-wells, I saw no living creature, but a surly dog, who followed me for a mile along a park wall, and a man who was moving about in the half-way town of Cross. The turnpike gates were all opened by a mechanical contrivance from a bed-room window; I seemed to myself in solitary possession of the whole sleeping country: — the summer night was divinely calm; no sound, except once or twice the cry of a child as I was passing the windows of cottages, ever broke upon the utter silence; and all things conspired to throw back my thoughts upon the extraordinary person whom I had quitted.

The fine saying of Addison is familiar to most readers, — that Babylon in ruins is not so affecting a spectacle, or so solemn, as a human mind overthrown by lunacy. How much more awful, then, and more magnificent a wreck, when a mind so regal as that of Coleridge is overthrown or threatened with overthrow, not by a visitation of Providence, but by the treachery of his own will, and the conspiracy as it were of himself against himself! Was it possible that this ruin had been caused or hurried forward by the dismal degradations of pecuniary difficulties? That was worth inquiring. I will here mention briefly that I *did* inquire two days after; and in consequence of what I heard, I contrived that a particular service should be tendered to Mr. Coleridge, a week after, through the hands of Mr. Cottle of Bristol, which might have the effect of liberating his mind from anxiety for a year or two, and thus rendering his great powers disposable to their natural uses. That service was accepted by Coleridge. To save him any feelings of distress, all names were concealed; but in a letter written by him, about fifteen years after this time, I found that

he had become aware of all the circumstances, perhaps through some indiscretion of Mr. Cottle's. A more important question I never ascertained — viz. whether this service had the effect of seriously lightening his mind. For some succeeding years he did certainly appear to me released from that load of despondency which oppressed him on my first introduction. Grave, indeed, he continued to be, and at times absorbed in gloom; nor did I ever see him in a state of perfectly natural cheerfulness. But as he strove in vain, for many years, to wean himself from his captivity to opium, a healthy state of spirits could not be much expected. Perhaps, indeed, where the liver and other organs had, for so large a period in life, been subject to a continual morbid stimulation, it may be impossible for the system ever to recover a natural action. Torpor, I suppose, must result from continued artificial excitement; and, perhaps, upon a scale of corresponding duration. Life, in such a case, may not offer a field of sufficient extent for unthreading the fatal links that have been wound about the machinery of health, and have crippled its natural play. Meantime, — to resume the thread of my wandering narrative, — on this serene summer night of 1807, as I moved slowly along, with my eyes continually settling upon the Northern constellations, which, like all the fixed stars, by their immeasurable and almost spiritual remoteness from human affairs, naturally throw the thoughts upon the perishableness of our earthly troubles, in contrast with their own utter peace and solemnity, — I reverted, at intervals, to all I had ever heard of Coleridge, and strove to weave it into some continuous sketch of his life. I hardly remember how much I then knew; I know but little now — that little I will here jot down upon paper.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was the son of a learned clergyman — the vicar of Ottery St. Mary, in the southern quarter of Devonshire. It is painful to mention that he was almost an object of persecution to his mother; why, I could never learn. His father was described to me, by Coleridge himself, as a sort of Parson Adams, being distinguished by his erudition, his inexperience of the world, and his guileless simplicity. I once purchased in London, and, I suppose, still possess, two elementary books on the Latin language by this reverend gentleman; one of them, as I found, making somewhat higher pretensions than a common school grammar. In particular, an attempt is made to reform the theory of the cases; and it gives a pleasant specimen of the rustic scholar's *naiveté*, that he seriously proposes to banish such vexatious terms as the *accusative;* and, by way of simplifying the matter to tender minds, that we should call it, in all time to come, the '*quale-quare-quidditive*' case, upon what incomprehensible principle I never could fathom. He used regularly to delight his village flock, on Sundays, with Hebrew quotations in his sermons, which he always introduced as the 'immediate language of the Holy Ghost.' This proved unfortunate to his successor; he also was a learned man, and his parishioners admitted it, but generally with a sigh for past times, and a sorrowful complaint that he was still far below Parson Coleridge — for that *he* never gave them any 'immediate language of the Holy Ghost.' I presume, that, like the reverend gentleman so pleasantly sketched in St. Ronan's Well, Mr. Coleridge, who resembled that person in his Oriental learning and his simplicity, must also have resembled him in short-sightedness, of which his son used to relate a ludicrous instance. Dining in a large party, one day, the modest divine was suddenly shocked by perceiving some

part, as he conceived, of his own snowy shirt emerging from a part of his habiliments, which we shall suppose to have been his waistcoat. It was *not* that; but for decorum we shall so call it. The stray portion of his supposed tunic was admonished of its errors by a forcible thrust back into its proper home; but still another *limbus* persisted to emerge, or seemed to persist, and still another, until the learned gentleman absolutely perspired with the labor of re-establishing order. And, after all, he saw with anguish, that some arrears of the snowy indecorum still remained to reduce into obedience. To this remnant of rebellion he was proceeding to apply himself — strangely confounded, however, at the obstinacy of the insurrection — when the mistress of the house, rising to lead away the ladies from the table, and all parties naturally rising with her, it became suddenly apparent to every eye, that the worthy Orientalist had been most laboriously stowing away, into the capacious receptacles of his own habiliments, the snowy folds of a lady's gown, belonging to his next neighbor; and so voluminously, that a very small portion of it, indeed, remained for the lady's own use; the natural consequence of which was, of course, that the lady appeared almost inextricably yoked to the learned theologian, and could not in any way effect her release, until after certain operations upon the Vicar's dress, and a continued refunding and rolling out of snowy mazes upon snowy mazes, in quantities which, at length, proved too much for the gravity of the company. Inextinguishable laughter arose from all parties, except the erring and unhappy doctor, who, in dire perplexity, continued still refunding with all his might, until he had paid up the last arrears of his long debt, and thus put an end to a case of distress more memorable to himself and his parishioners, than any '*quale-quare-quidditive*' case that probably had ever perplexed his learning.

In his childish days, and when he had become an orphan, S. T. Coleridge was removed to the heart of London, and placed on the great foundation of Christ's Hospital. He there found himself associated, as a schoolfellow, with several boys destined to distinction in after life, and especially with one who, if not endowed with powers equally large and comprehensive, had, however, genius not less original or exquisite than his own — the inimitable Charles Lamb. But, in learning, Coleridge outstripped all competitors, and rose to be the Captain of the school. It is indeed a most memorable fact to be recorded of a boy, that, before completing his fifteenth year, he had translated the Greek Hymns of Synesius into English anacreontic verse. This was not a school task, but a labor of love and choice; to appreciate which, it is necessary to recall the dark philosophy which constitutes the theme of Synesius. Before leaving school, Coleridge had an opportunity of reading the sonnets of Bowles, which so powerfully impressed his poetic sensibility, that he made forty transcripts of them with his own pen, by way of presents to youthful friends. From Christ's Hospital, by the privilege of his station at school, he was transferred to Jesus College, Cambridge. It was here, no doubt, that his acquaintance began with the philosophic system of Hartley, for that eminent person had been a Jesus man. Frend also, the mathematician, of heretical memory, belonged to that College, and was probably contemporary with Coleridge. What accident, or imprudence, carried him away from Cambridge before he had completed the usual period of study, or (I believe) taken his degree, I never heard. He had certainly won some distinction as a scholar, having obtained the prize for a Greek ode in Sapphic metre, of which the sentiments (as he observes himself) were better than the

Greek. Porson was accustomed, meanly enough, to ridicule the Greek *lexis* of this ode, which was to break a fly upon the wheel. The ode was clever enough for a boy; but to such skill in Greek as could have enabled him to compose with critical accuracy, Coleridge never made pretensions. He had, however, a far more philosophic insight into much of the structure of that language than Porson had, or could have comprehended.

The incidents of Coleridge's life about this period, and some account of a heavy disappointment in love, which probably it was that carried him away from Cambridge, are to be found embodied (with what modifications I know not) in the novel of 'Edmund Oliver,' written by the late Charles Lloyd. It is well known that, in a frenzy of unhappy feeling at the rejection he met with from the lady of his choice, Coleridge enlisted as a private into a dragoon regiment. He fell off his horse on several occasions, but, perhaps, not more than raw recruits are apt to do when first put under the riding-master. But Coleridge was naturally ill framed for a good horseman. He is also represented in 'Edmund Oliver,' as having found peculiar difficulty or annoyance in grooming his horse. But the most romantic incident in that scene of his life was in the circumstances of his discharge. It is said (but I vouch for no part of the story) that Coleridge, as a private, mounted guard at the door of a room in which his officers happened to give a ball. Two of them had a dispute upon some Greek word or passage when close to Coleridge's station. He interposed his authentic decision of the case. The officers stared as though one of their own horses had sung 'Rule Britannia;' questioned him; heard his story; pitied his misfortunes; and, finally, subscribed to purchase his discharge. Not very long after this, Coleridge became acquainted with the two Wedg-

woods, both of whom, admiring his fine powers, subscribed to send him into North Germany, where, at the university of Göttingen, he completed his education according to his own scheme. The most celebrated professor whose lectures he attended, was the far-famed Blumenbach, of whom he continued to speak through life with almost filial reverence. Returning to England, he attended Mr. Thomas Wedgwood, as a friend, throughout the afflicting and anomalous illness which brought him to the grave. It was supposed by medical men that the cause of Mr. Wedgwood's continued misery was a stricture of some part in the intestines (the colon, it was believed). The external symptoms were torpor and defective irritability, together with everlasting restlessness. By way of some relief to this latter symptom, Mr. Wedgwood purchased a travelling carriage, and wandered up and down England, taking Coleridge as his companion. And, as a desperate attempt to rouse and irritate the decaying sensibility of his system, I have been assured by a surviving friend, that Mr. Wedgwood at one time opened a butcher's shop, conceiving that the affronts and disputes to which such a situation would expose him, might act beneficially upon his increasing torpor. This strange expedient* served only to express the anguish which had now mastered his nature: it was soon abandoned; and this accomplished but miserable man soon sank under his sufferings. What

* Which, however, his brother denied as a pure fable. On reading this account, he wrote to me, and in very courteous terms assured me that I had been misinformed. I now retain the story, simply as a version, partially erroneous, no doubt, of perhaps some true anecdote that may have escaped the surviving Mr. Wedgwood's knowledge; my reason for thinking thus being, that the same anecdote essentially, but varied in the circumstances, has reached me at different periods from parties having no connection whatsoever.

made the case more memorable was the combination of worldly prosperity which had settled upon this gentleman He was rich, young, generally beloved, distinguished for his scientific attainments, publicly honored for patriotic services, and had before him, when he first fell ill, every prospect of a splendid and most useful career.

By the death of Mr. Wedgwood, Coleridge succeeded to a regular annuity of £75, which that gentleman had bequeathed to him. The other Mr. Wedgwood granted him an equal allowance. Now came his marriage, his connection with politics and political journals, his residence in various parts of Somersetshire, and his consequent introduction to Mr. Wordsworth. In his politics, Mr. Coleridge was most sincere and most enthusiastic. No man hailed with profounder sympathy the French Revolution; and though he saw cause to withdraw his regard from many of the democratic zealots in this country, and even from the revolutionary interest as it was subsequently conducted, he continued to worship the original revolutionary cause in a pure Miltonic spirit; and he continued also to abominate the policy of Mr. Pitt in a degree which I myself find it difficult to understand. The very spirited little poem of 'Fire, Famine, and Slaughter,' who are supposed to meet in conference, to describe their horrid triumphs, and then to ask in a whisper *who* it was that unchained them, to which each in turn replies,

'Letters four do form his name!'

expresses his horror of Mr. Pitt personally in a most extravagant shape, but merely for the purpose of poetic effect; for he had no real unkindness in his heart towards any human being; and I have often heard him disclaim the hatred which is here expressed for Mr. Pitt, as he did also very elaborately and earnestly in print. Somewhere

about this time, Coleridge attempted, under Sheridan's countenance, to bring a tragedy upon the stage of Drury Lane; but his prospect of success, as I once heard or read, was suddenly marred by Mr. Sheridan's inability to sacrifice what he thought a good jest. One scene presented a cave with streams of water weeping down the sides; and the first words were, in a sort of mimicry of the sound, 'Drip, drip, drip!' Upon which Sheridan repeated aloud, 'Drip, drip, drip! — why, God bless me, there's nothing here but *dripping;*' and so arose a chorus of laughter amongst the actors fatal to the probationary play

CHAPTER VII.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

About the latter end of the century, Coleridge visited North Germany again, in company with Mr. and Miss Wordsworth. Their tour was chiefly confined to the Hartz forest and its neighborhood. But the incident most worthy of remembrance in their excursion, was a visit made to Klopstock; whom they found either at Hamburgh or, perhaps, at the Danish town (as then it was) of Altona; for Klopstock was a pensioner of the Danish king. An anonymous writer, who attacked Coleridge most truculently in an early number of Blackwood, and with an *acharnement* that must astonish those who knew its object, has made the mistake of supposing Coleridge to have been the chief speaker, who did not speak at all. The case was this: Klopstock could not speak English, though everybody remembers the pretty broken English[3] of his second wife. Neither Coleridge nor Wordsworth, on the other hand, spoke German with any fluency. French, therefore, was the only medium of free communication; that being pretty equally familiar to Wordsworth and to Klopstock. But Coleridge found so much difficulty even in *reading* French, that, wherever (as in the case of 'Leibnitz's Theodicée') there was a choice between an original written in French and a translation, though it might be a very faulty one, in Ger-

man, he always preferred the latter. Hence, it happened that Wordsworth, on behalf of the English party, was the sole supporter of the dialogue. The anonymous critic says another thing, which certainly has an air of truth viz. that Klopstock plays a very secondary *role* in the interview (or words to that effect). But how was that to be avoided in reporting the case, supposing the fact to have been such? Now the plain truth is, that Wordsworth, upon his own ground, is an incomparable talker; whereas, Klubstick (as Coleridge used to call him) was always a feeble and careless one. Besides, he was now old and decaying. Nor at any time, nor in any accomplishment, could Klopstock have shone, unless in the noble art of skating. Wordsworth did the very opposite of that with which he was taxed; for, happening to look down at Klopstock's swollen legs, and recollecting his age, he felt touched by a sort of filial pity for his helplessness. And upon another principle, which, in my judgment, Wordsworth is disposed to carry too far, viz. the forbearance, and the ceremonious caution which he habitually concedes to an established reputation, even where he believes it to have been built on a hollow foundation, — he came to the conclusion, that it would not seem becoming in a young, and as yet obscure author, to report faithfully the real superiority he too easily maintained in such a colloquy.

But neither had Klopstock the pretensions as a poet, which the Blackwood writer seems to take for granted. Germany, the truth is, wanted a great Epic poet. Not having produced one in that early condition of her literary soil when such a growth is natural and favored by circumstances, the next thing was to manufacture a substitute. The force of Coleridge's well known repartee — when, in reply to a foreigner asserting that Klopstock was the German Milton, he said, 'True, sir; a *very* German

Milton,' — cannot be fully appreciated but by one who is familiar with the German poetry, and the small proportion in which it is a natural and spontaneous product. It has been often noticed, as the misfortune of the Roman literature, that it grew up too much under the oppression of Grecian models, and of Grecian models depraved by Alexandrian art; a fact, so far as it was a fact, which crippled the *genial* and characteristic spirit of the national mind. But this evil, after all, did not take effect except in a partial sense. Rome had cast much of her literature in her own moulds before these exotic models had begun to domineer. Not so with Germany. Her literature, since its revival in the last century (and the revival upon the impulse of what cattle! — Bodmer on the one hand, and Gottsched on the other!) has hardly moved a step in the freedom of natural grace. England for nineteen, and France for the twentieth of all her capital works, has given the too servile law: and with regard to Klopstock, if ever there was a good exemplification of the spurious and the counterfeit in literature, seek it in the 'Messiah.' He is verily and indeed the *Birmingham* Milton. This Klopstockian dialogue, by the way, was first printed (hardly *published*) in the original, or Lake edition of 'The Friend.' In the recast of that work it was omitted: nor has it been printed anywhere else that I am aware of.

About the close of the first revolutionary war it must have been, or in the brief interval of peace, that Coleridge resorted to the English Lakes as a place of residence. Wordsworth had a natural connection with that region by birth, breeding, and family alliances. Wordsworth attracted Coleridge to the Lakes; and Coleridge, through his affinity to Southey, eventually attracted *him*. Southey, as is known to all who take an interest in the Lake colony, married a sister of Mrs. Coleridge's: and,

is a singular eccentricity in the circumstances of that marriage, I may mention, that, on his wedding day, (at the very portico of the church, I have been told,) Southey left his bride, to embark for Lisbon. His uncle, Dr. Herbert, was chaplain to the English factory in that city; and it was to benefit by the facilities in that way opened to him for seeing Portugal that Southey now went abroad. He extended his tour to Spain; and the result of his notices was communicated to the world in a volume of travels. By such accidents of personal or family connection as I have mentioned, was the Lake colony gathered; and the critics of the day, unaware of the real facts, supposed them to have assembled under common views in literature — particularly with regard to the true functions of poetry, and the true theory of poetic diction. Under this original blunder, laughable it is to mention, that they went on to *find* in their writings all the agreements and common characteristics which their blunder had presumed: and they incorporated the whole community under the name of the *Lake School*. Yet Wordsworth and Southey never had one principle in common. Indeed, Southey troubled himself little about abstract principles in anything; and so far from agreeing with Wordsworth to the extent of setting up a separate school in poetry, he told me himself (August, 1812), that he highly disapproved both of Mr. Wordsworth's theories and of his practice. It is very true, that one man may sympathize with another, or even follow his leading, unconscious that he does so; or he may go so far as, in the very act of virtual imitation, to deem himself in opposition; but this sort of blind agreement could hardly be supposed of two men as discerning and as self-examining as Wordsworth and Southey. And, in fact, a philosophic investigation of the difficult questions con-

nected with this whole slang about schools, Lake schools, &c., would show that Southey has not, nor ever had, any *peculiarities* in common with Wordsworth, beyond that of exchanging the old prescriptive diction of poetry, introduced between the periods of Milton and Cowper, for the simpler and profounder forms of daily life in some instances, and of the Bible in others. The bold and uniform practice of Wordsworth was here adopted timidly by Southey. In this respect, however, Cowper had already begun the reform; and his influence, concurring with the now larger influence of Wordsworth, has operated so extensively, as to make their own original differences at this day less perceptible.

By the way, the word *colony*, reminds me that I have omitted to mention, in its proper place, some scheme for migrating to America, which had been entertained by Coleridge and Southey about the year 1794–95, under the learned name of *Pantisocracy*. So far as I ever heard, it differed little, except in its Grecian name, from any other scheme for mitigating the privations of a wilderness, by settling in a cluster of families bound together by congenial tastes and uniform principles, rather than in self-depending, insulated households. Steadily pursued, it might, after all, have been a fortunate plan for Coleridge. 'Soliciting my food from daily toil,' a line in which Coleridge alludes to the scheme, implies a condition that would have upheld Coleridge's health and happiness, somewhat better than the habits of luxurious city life as now constituted in Europe. To return to the Lakes, and to the Lake colony of poets: — So little were Southey and Wordsworth connected by any personal intercourse in those days, and so little disposed to be connected, that, whilst the latter had a cottage in Grasmere, Southey pitched his tent at Greta Hall, on a little eminence rising

immediately from the romantic river Greta and the town of Keswick. Grasmere is in Westmoreland; Keswick in Cumberland; and they are thirteen good miles apart. Coleridge and his family were domiciliated in Greta Hall, sharing that house, a tolerably large one, on some principle of amicable division, with Mr. Southey. But Coleridge personally was more often to be found at Grasmere — which presented the threefold attractions of loveliness so complete, as to eclipse even the scenery of Derwentwater; a pastoral state of society, free from the deformities of a little town like Keswick; and, finally, the society of Wordsworth. Not before 1815, or 1816, could it be said that Southey and Wordsworth were even upon friendly terms: so entirely is it untrue that they combined to frame a school of poetry. Up to that time, they viewed each other with mutual respect, but also with mutual dislike; almost, I might say, with mutual disgust. Wordsworth disliked in Southey the want of depth, as regards the power of philosophic abstraction, of comprehensive views, and of severe principles of thought. Southey disliked in Wordsworth the air of dogmatism, and the unaffable haughtiness of his manner. Other more trivial reasons combined with these.

At this time, when Coleridge first settled at the Lakes, or not long after, a romantic and somewhat tragical affair drew the eyes of all England, and, for many years, continued to draw the steps of tourists, to one of the most secluded Cumberland valleys, so little visited previously, that it might be described almost as an undiscovered chamber of that romantic district. Coleridge was brought into a closer connection with this affair than merely by the general relation of neighborhood; for an article of his in a morning paper, I believe, unintentionally furnished the original clew for unmasking the base impostor who

figured as the foremost actor in this tale. Other generations have arisen since that time, who must naturally be unacquainted with the circumstances; and, on their account, I shall here recall them. One day in the Lake season, there drove up to the Royal Oak, the principal inn at Keswick, a handsome and well-appointed travelling carriage, containing one gentleman of somewhat dashing exterior. The stranger was a picturesque-hunter, but not of that order who fly round the ordinary tour with the velocity of lovers posting to Gretna, or of criminals running from the police; his purpose was to domiciliate himself in this beautiful scenery, and to see it at his leisure. From Keswick, as his head-quarters, he made excursions in every direction amongst the neighboring valleys; meeting generally a good deal of respect and attention, partly on account of his handsome equipage, and still more from his visiting cards, which designated him as 'The Hon. Augustus Hope.' Under this name, he gave himself out for a brother of Lord Hopetoun's, whose great income was well known, and, perhaps, exaggerated amongst the dalesmen of northern England. Some persons had discernment enough to doubt of this; for the man's breeding and deportment, though showy, had a tang of vulgarity about it; and Coleridge assured me, that he was grossly ungrammatical in his ordinary onversation. However, one fact, soon dispersed by the people of a little rustic post-office, laid asleep all demurs; he not only received letters addressed to him under this assumed name — *that* might be through collusion with accomplices — but he himself continually *franked* letters by that name. Now, *that* being a capital offence, being not only a forgery, but, (as a forgery on the Post-office,) sure to be prosecuted, nobody presumed to question his pretensions any longer; and, henceforward, he went to

all places with the consideration attached to an Earl's brother. All doors flew open at his approach; boats, boatmen, nets, and the most unlimited sporting privileges, were placed at the disposal of the 'Honorable' gentleman: and the hospitality of the whole country taxed itself to offer a suitable reception to the patrician Scotsman. It could be no blame to a shepherd girl, bred in the sternest solitude which England has to show, that she should fall into a snare which hardly any of her betters had escaped. Nine miles from Keswick, by the nearest bridle-road, but fourteen or fifteen by any route which the honorable gentleman's travelling carriage could have traversed, lies the Lake of Buttermere. Its margin, which is overhung by some of the loftiest and steepest of the Cumbrian mountains, exhibits on either side few traces of human neighborhood; the level area, where the hills recede enough to allow of any, is of a wild pastoral character, or almost savage; the waters of the lake are deep and sullen; and the barrier mountains, by excluding the sun for much of his daily course, strengthen the gloomy impressions. At the foot of this lake (that is, at the end where its waters issue) lie a few unornamented fields, through which rolls a little brook-like river connecting it with the larger Lake of Crummock; and at the edge of this miniature domain, upon the roadside, stands a cluster of cottages, so small and few that, in the richer tracts of the islands, they would scarcely be complimented with the name of hamlet. One of these, and I believe the principal, belonged to an independent proprietor, called, in the local dialect, a '*Statesman;*' * and more, perhaps, for the sake of gathering any little local news, than with

* *i. e.* — A 'Statesman elliptically for an Estatesman — a native dalesman possessing and personally cultivating a patrimonial landed estate.

much view to pecuniary profit at that era, this cottage offered the accommodations of an inn to the traveller and his horse. Rare, however, must have been the mounted traveller in those days, unless visiting Buttermere for itself and as a *terminus ad quem;* for the road led to no further habitation of man, with the exception of some four or five pastoral cabins, equally humble, in Gatesgarth Dale.

Hither, however, in an evil hour for the peace of this little brotherhood of shepherds, came the cruel spoiler from Keswick. His errand was, to witness or to share in the char-fishing; for in Derwentwater (the Lake of Keswick) no char is found, which breeds only in the deeper waters, such as Windermere, Crummock, Buttermere, &c. But whatever had been his first object, *that* was speedily forgotten in one more deeply interesting. The daughter of the house, a fine young woman of eighteen, acted as waiter.* In a situation so solitary, the stranger had unlimited facilities for enjoying her company, and recommending himself to her favor. Doubts about his pretensions never arose in so simple a place as this; they were overruled before they *could* well have arisen, by the opinion now general in Keswick that he really was what he pretended to be: and thus, with little demur except in the shape of a few natural words of parting anger from a defeated or rejected rustic admirer, the young woman gave her hand in marriage to the

* *Waiter:* — since this was first written, social changes in London, by introducing females very extensively into the office (once monopolized by men) of attending the visitors at the tables of eating-houses, have introduced a corresponding new word, viz. *waitress;* which word, twenty-five years back, would have been simply ludricrous; but now has become as indispensable to precision of language as the words, traitress, heiress, inheritrix, &c.

showy and unprincipled stranger. I know not whether the marriage was, or could have been celebrated in the little mountain chapel of Buttermere. If it were, I persuade myself that the most hardened villain must have felt a momentary pang on violating the altar of such a chapel, so touchingly does it express, by its miniature dimensions, the almost helpless humility of that little pastoral community to whose spiritual wants it has from generation to generation administered. It is not only the very smallest chapel by many degrees in all England, but is so mere a toy in outward appearance, that, were it not for its antiquity, its wild mountain exposure, and its consecrated connection with the final hopes and fears of the adjacent pastoral hamlet — but for these considerations, the first movement of a stranger's feelings would be towards loud laughter; for the little chapel looks not so much a mimic chapel in a drop scene from the Opera House, as a miniature copy from such a scene; and evidently could not receive within its walls more than a half dozen of households. From this sanctuary it was — from beneath the maternal shadow, if not from the altar * of this lonely chapel — that the heartless villain carried off the flower of the mountains. Between this place and Keswick they continued to move backwards and forwards, until at length, with the startling of a thunderclap to the affrighted mountaineers, the bubble burst: officers of justice appeared: the stranger was easily intercepted from flight; and, upon a capital charge, was borne away to Carlisle. At the ensuing assizes he was tried for forgery,

* My doubt is founded upon the varying tenure of these secluded chapels as to privileges of marrying or burying. The mere name of chapel, though, of course, in regular connection with some mother church, does not of itself imply whether it has or has not the power to solemnize a marriage.

on the prosecution of the Post-office; found guilty, left for execution, and executed accordingly. On the day of his condemnation, Wordsworth and Coleridge passed through Carlisle, and endeavored to obtain an interview with him. Wordsworth succeeded; but, for some unknown reason, the prisoner steadily refused to see Coleridge; a caprice which could not be penetrated. It is true that he had, during his whole residence at Keswick, avoided Coleridge with a solicitude which had revived the original suspicions against him in some quarters, after they had generally subsided. But for this, his motive had then been sufficient: he was of a Devonshire family, and naturally feared the eye, or the inquisitive examination, of one who bore a name immemorially associated with the southern part of that county.

Coleridge, however, had been transplanted so immaturely from his native region, that few people in England knew less of its family connections. That, perhaps, was unknown to this malefactor; but at any rate he knew that all motive was now at an end for disguise of any sort; so that his reserve, in this particular, was unintelligible. However, if not him, Coleridge saw and examined his very interesting papers. These were chiefly letters from women whom he had injured, pretty much in the same way and by the same impostures as he had so recently practised in Cumberland; and, as Coleridge assured me, were in part the most agonizing appeals that he had ever read to human justice and pity. The man's real name was, I think, Hatfield. And amongst the papers were two separate correspondences, of some length, from two young women, apparently of superior condition in life, (one the daughter of an English clergyman,) whom this villain had deluded by marriage, and, after some cohabitation, abandoned — one of them with a family of young

children. Great was the emotion of Coleridge when he recurred to his remembrance of these letters, and bitter — almost vindictive — was the indignation with which he spoke of Hatfield. One set of letters appeared to have been written under too certain a knowledge of *his* villany to whom they were addressed; though still relying on some possible remains of humanity, or perhaps, (the poor writer might think,) on some lingering relics of affection for herself. The other set was even more distressing; they were written under the first conflicts of suspicions, alternately repelling with warmth the gloomy doubts which were fast arising, and then yielding to their afflicting evidence: raving in one page under the misery of alarm, in another courting the delusions of hope, and luring back the perfidious deserter — here resigning herself to despair, and there again laboring to show that all might yet be well. Coleridge said often, in looking back upon that frightful exposure of human guilt and misery — and I also echoed his feeling — that the man who, when pursued by these heart-rending apostrophes, and with this litany of anguish sounding in his ears, from despairing women, and from famishing children, could yet find it possible to enjoy the calm pleasures of a Lake tourist, and deliberately to hunt for the picturesque, must have been a fiend of that order which fortunately does not often emerge amongst men. It is painful to remember that, in those days, amongst the multitudes who ended their career in the same ignominious way, and the majority for offences connected with the forgery of Bank notes, there must have been a considerable number who perished from the very opposite cause — viz. because they felt, too passionately and profoundly for prudence, the claims of those who looked up to them for support. One common scaffold confounds the most flinty hearts

and the tenderest. However, in this instance, it was in some measure the heartless part of Hatfield's conduct, which drew upon him his ruin: for the Cumberland Jury, as I have been told, declared their unwillingness to hang him for having forged a frank: and both they, and those who refused to aid his escape, when first apprehended, were reconciled to this harshness entirely by what they heard of his conduct to their injured young fellow-countrywoman.

She, meantime, under the name of *the Beauty of Buttermere*, became an object of interest to all England: dramas and melo-dramas were produced in the London suburban * theatres upon her story; and for many a year

* In connection with this mention of 'suburban' and minor theatres, it is but fair to cite a passage relating expressly to Mary of Buttermere from the Seventh Book (entitled 'Residence in London') of Wordsworth's 'Prelude': —

'Here, too, were *forms and pressures of the time*,
Rough, bold, as Grecian comedy display'd
When Art was young; dramas of living men,
And recent things yet warm with life; a sea-fight,
Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
Divulged by Truth, and magnified by fame;
Such as the daring brotherhood of late
Set forth, too serious theme for that light place —
I mean, O distant friend! a story drawn
From our own ground — the Maid of Buttermere;
And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife,
Deserted and deceived, the spoiler came
And woo'd the artless daughter of the hills,
And wedded her, in cruel mockery
Of love and marriage bonds. These words to thee
Must needs bring back the moment when we first,
Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's name,
Beheld her serving at the cottage inn,
Both stricken, as she enter'd or withdrew,
With admiration of her modest mien

afterwards, shoals of tourists crowded to the secluded lake, and the little homely cabaret, which had been the scene of her brief romance. It was fortunate for a person in her distressing situation, that her home was not in a town. the few, and simple neighbors, who had witnessed her imaginary elevation, having little knowledge of worldly feelings, never for an instant connected with her disappointment any sense of the ludicrous, or spoke of it as a calamity to which her vanity might have co-operated. They treated it as unmixed injury, reflecting shame upon nobody but the wicked perpetrator. Hence, without much trial to her womanly sensibilities, she found herself able to resume her situation in the little inn; and this she continued to hold for many years. In that place, and that capacity, I saw her repeatedly, and shall here say a word upon her personal appearance, because the Lake poets all admired her greatly. Her figure was, in my eyes, good; but I doubt whether most of my readers would have thought it such. She was none of your evanescent, wasp-waisted beauties; on the contrary, she

> And carriage, mark'd by unexampled grace.
> We since that time not unfamiliarly
> Have seen her — her discretion have observed,
> Her just opinions, delicate reserve,
> Her patience and humility of mind,
> Unspoil'd by commendation and th' excess
> Of public notice — an offensive light
> To a meek spirit suffering inwardly.'

The 'distant friend' here apostrophized is Coleridge, then at Malta. But it is fair to record this memorial of the fair mountaineer — going perhaps as much beyond the public estimate of her pretensions as my own was below it. It should be added, that William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (to whom the writer appeals, as in general sympathy with himself) had seen Mary more frequently, and had conversed with her much more freely, than myself.

was rather large every way; tallish, and proportionably broad. Her face was fair, and her features feminine; and unquestionably she was what all the world have agreed to call 'good-looking.' But, except in her arms, which had something of a statuesque beauty, and in her carriage which expressed a womanly grace, together with some slight dignity and self-possession, I confess that I looked in vain for any *positive* qualities of any sort or degree. *Beautiful*, in any emphatic sense, she was not. Everything about her face and bust was negative; simply without offence. Even this, however, was more than could be said at all times: for the expression of her countenance was often disagreeable. This arose out of her situation; connected as it was with defective sensibility, and a misdirected pride.

Nothing operates so differently upon different minds, and different styles of beauty, as the inquisitive gaze of strangers, whether in the spirit of respectful admiration, or of insolence. Some I have seen, upon whose angelic beauty this sort of confusion settled advantageously, and like a softening veil; others, in whom it meets with proud resentment, are sometimes disfigured by it. In Mary of Buttermere, it roused mere anger and disdain; which, meeting with the sense of her humble and dependent situation, gave birth to a most unhappy aspect of countenance. Men, who had no touch of a gentleman's nature in their composition, sometimes insulted her by looks and by words: and she too readily attributed the same spirit of impertinent curiosity to every man whose eyes happened to settle steadily upon her face. Yet, once at least, I must have seen her under the most favorable circumstances: for on my first visit to Buttermere, I had the pleasure of Mr. Southey's company, who was incapable of wounding anybody's feelings, and to Mary, in

particular, was well known by kind attentions, and I believe by some services. Then at least I saw her to advantage, and perhaps, for a figure of her build, at the best age; for it was about nine or ten years after her misfortune, when she might be twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. We were alone, a solitary pair of tourists: nothing arose to confuse or distress her. She waited upon us at dinner, and talked to us freely. 'This is a respectable young woman,' I said to myself; but nothing of that enthusiasm could I feel, which beauty, such as I *have* beheld at the lakes, would have been apt to raise under a similar misfortune. One lady, not very scrupulous in her embellishments of facts, used to tell an anecdote of her, which I hope was exaggerated. Some friend of hers, (as she affirmed,) in company with a large party, visited Buttermere, within a day or two after that upon which Hatfield suffered; and she protested that Mary threw upon the table, with an emphatic gesture, the Carlisle paper, containing an elaborate account of his execution.

It is an instance of Coleridge's carelessness — that he, who had as little ill-nature in his temper as any person whom I have ever known, managed, in reporting this story at the time of its occurrence, to get himself hooked into a personal quarrel, which hung over his head unsettled for nine or ten years. A Liverpool merchant, who was then meditating a house in the vale of Grasmere, and perhaps might have incurred Coleridge's anger, by thus disturbing, with inappropriate intrusions, this loveliest of all English landscapes, had connected himself a good deal with Hatfield during his Keswick masquerade: and was said even to have carried his regard to that villain so far as to have christened one of his own children by the names of 'Augustus Hope.' With these and other cir-

cumstances, expressing the extent of the infatuation amongst the swindler's dupes, Coleridge made the public merry. Naturally the Liverpool merchant was not amongst those who admired the facetiousness of Coleridge on this occasion, but swore vengeance whenever they should meet. They never *did* meet, until ten years had gone by, and then, oddly enough, it was in the Liverpool man's own house — that very nuisance of a house which had, I suppose, first armed Coleridge's wrath against him. This house, by time and accident, in no very wonderful way, had passed into the hands of Wordsworth as tenant Coleridge, as was still less wonderful, had become the visitor of Wordsworth on returning from Malta; and the Liverpool merchant, as was also natural, either seeking his rent, or for what other purpose I know not, calling upon Wordsworth, met Coleridge in the hall. Now came the hour for settling old accounts. I was present, and can report the case. Both looked grave, and colored a little. But Coleridge, requesting his enemy's company in the garden, entered upon a long metaphysical dissertation, which was rather puzzling to answer. It seemed to be an expansion, by Thomas Aquinas, of that parody upon a well known passage in Shenstone, where the writer says —

> 'He kicked me down stairs with such a sweet grace,
> That I thought he was handing me up.'

And in the upshot it clearly made it appear that, purely on principles of good neighborhood, and universal philanthropy, could Coleridge have meditated or executed the insult offered in the *Morning Post*. The Liverpool merchant rubbed his forehead, and seemed a little perplexed; but at length, considering, perhaps, how very like Duns Scotus, or Albertus Magnus, Coleridge had shown himself n this luminous explanation, he began to reflect, that had

any one of those distinguished men offered a similar affront, it would have been impossible to resent it; for who could think of caning the seraphic doctor? or would it tell to any man's advantage in history that he had kicked Thomas Aquinas? On these principles, therefore, without saying one word, he held out his hand, and a lasting reconciliation followed.

Not very long, I believe after this affair of Hatfield, Coleridge went to Malta. His inducement to such a step must have been merely a desire to see the most interesting regions of the Mediterranean, under the shelter and advantageous introduction of an official station. It was, however, an unfortunate chapter of his life: for being necessarily thrown a good deal upon his own resources in the narrow society of a garrison, he there confirmed and cherished, if he did not there form, his habit of taking opium in large quantities. I am the last person in the world to press conclusions harshly or uncandidly against Coleridge; but I believe it to be notorious that he first began the use of opium, not as a relief from any bodily pains or nervous irritations — for his constitution was strong and excellent — but as a source of luxurious sensations. It is a great misfortune, at least it is a great peril, to have tasted the enchanted cup of youthful rapture incident to the poetic temperament. That standard of high-wrought sensibility once made known experimentally, it is rare to see a submission afterwards to the sobrieties of daily life. Coleridge, to speak in the words of Cervantes, wanted better bread than was made of wheat; and when youthful blood no longer sustained the riot of his animal spirits, he endeavored to excite them by artificial stimulants.

At Malta he became acquainted with Commodore Decatur and other Americans of distinction; and this

brought him afterwards into connection with Allston the American artist. Of Sir Alexander Ball, one of Lord Nelson's captains in the battle of the Nile, and now Governor of Malta, he, spoke and wrote uniformly in a lavish style of panegyric, for which plainer men found it difficult to see the slightest ground. It was, indeed, Coleridge's amiable infirmity to project his own mind, and his own very peculiar ideas, nay, even his own expressions and illustrative metaphors, upon other men, and to contemplate these reflex images from himself, as so many characters having an absolute ground in some separate object. Ball and Bell* were two of these pet

* '*Ball and Bell*' — '*Bell and Ball:*' — viz. Sir Alexander Ball, Governor of Malta, and Dr. Andrew Bell, the importer into England from Madras of that machinery for facilitating popular education, which was afterwards fraudulently appropriated by Joseph Lancaster. The Bishop of Durham (Shute Barrington) gave to Dr. Bell, in reward of his Madras services, the princely Mastership of Sherborne Hospital. The doctor saved, in this post, £125,000, and with this money founded Trinity College, Glenalmond, in Perthshire. Most men have their enemies and calumniators: Dr. Bell had *his*, who happened rather indecorously to be his wife — from whom he was legally separated, or (as in Scotch law it is called) *divorced;* not, of course, divorced *à vinculo matrimonii* (which only amounts to a divorce in the English sense — such a divorce as enables the parties to contract another marriage), but simply divorced *à mensâ et thoro*. This legal separation, however, did not prevent the lady from persecuting the unhappy doctor with everlasting letters, indorsed outside with records of her enmity and spite. Sometimes she addressed her epistles thus: — 'To that supreme of rogues, who looks the hang-dog that he is, Doctor (such a doctor!) Andrew Bell.' Or again: — 'To the ape of apes, and the knave of knaves, who is recorded to have once paid a debt — but a small one, you may be sure, it was that he selected for this wonderful experiment — in fact, it was 4½d. Had it been on the other side of 6d., he must have died before he could have achieved so dreadful a sacrifice.' Many others, most ingeniously varied in the style of abuse, I have heard

subjects; he had a 'craze' about each of them; and to each he ascribed thoughts and words, to which, had they been put upon the rack, they never would have confessed.

From Malta, on his return homewards, he went to Rome and Naples. One of the Cardinals, he tells us, warned him, by the Pope's wish, of some plot, set on foot by Bonaparte, for seizing him as an anti-Gallican writer. This statement was ridiculed, by the anonymous assailant in *Blackwood*, as the very consummation of moon-struck vanity; and it is there compared to John Dennis's frenzy in retreating from the seacoast, under the belief that Louis XIV. had commissioned emissaries to land on the English shore and make a dash at his person. But, after all, the thing is not so entirely improbable. For it is certain that some orator of the Opposition (Charles Fox,

rehearsed by Coleridge, Southey, Lloyd, &c.; and one, in particular, addressed to the doctor, when spending a summer at the cottage of Robert Newton, an old soldier, in Grasmere, presented on the back two separate adjurations, one specially addressed to Robert himself, pathetically urging him to look sharply after the rent of his lodgings; and the other more generally addressed to the unfortunate person as yet undisclosed to the British public (and in this case turning out to be myself), who might be incautious enough to pay the postage at Ambleside. 'Don't grant him an hour's credit,' she urged upon the person unknown, 'if I had any regard to my family.' '*Cash down!*' she wrote twice over. — Why the doctor submitted to these annoyances, nobody knew. Some said it was mere indolence; but others held it to be a cunning compromise with her inexorable malice. The letters were certainly open to the 'public' eye; but meantime the 'public' was a very narrow one: the clerks in the post-office had little time for digesting such amenities of conjugal affection; and the chance bearer of the letters to the doctor would naturally solve the mystery by supposing an *extra* portion of madness in the writer, rather than an *extra* portion of knavery in the reverend receiver.

as Coleridge asserts,) had pointed out all the principal writers in the *Morning Post*, to Napoleon's vengeance, by describing the war as a war 'of that journal's creation.' And, as to the insinuation that Napoleon was above throwing his regards upon a simple writer of political essays, *that* is not only abundantly confuted by many scores of analogous cases, but also is specially put down by a case circumstantially recorded in the second tour to Paris, by the celebrated John Scott. It there appears, that, on no other ground whatever, than that of his connection with the London newspaper press, some friend of Mr. Scott's had been courted most assiduously by Napoleon during the *hundred days*. Assuredly, Coleridge deserved, beyond all other men that ever were connected with the daily press, to be regarded with distinction. Worlds of fine thinking lie buried in that vast abyss, never to be disentombed or restored to human admiration. Like the sea, it has swallowed treasures without end, that no diving-bell will bring up again. But nowhere throughout its shoreless magazines of wealth, does there lie such a bed of pearls confounded with the rubbish and 'purgamenta' of ages, as in the political papers of Coleridge. No more *appreciable* monument could be raised to the memory of Coleridge, than a republication of his essays in the *Morning Post*, but still more of those afterwards published in the *Courier*. And here, by the way, it may be mentioned, that the sagacity of Coleridge, as applied to the signs of the times, is illustrated by the fact, that, distinctly and solemnly he foretold the restoration of the Bourbons, at a period when most people viewed such an event as the most romantic of visions, and not less chimerical than that 'march upon Paris,' of Lord Hawkesbury's, which for so many years supplied a theme of laughter to the Whigs.

Why Coleridge left Malta, is as difficult to explain upon any principles of ordinary business, as why he had ever gone thither. The post of secretary, if it imposed any official attendance of a regular kind, or any official correspondence, must have been but poorly filled by *him;* and Sir Alexander Ball, if I have collected his character justly, was not likely to accept the gorgeous philosophy of Coleridge, as an indemnification for irregular performance of his public duties. Perhaps, therefore, though on the best terms of mutual regard, they might be mutually pleased to part. At any rate they *did* part; and poor Coleridge was seasick the whole of his homeward (as he had been through the whole of his outward) voyage.

It was not long after this event that my own introduction to Coleridge occurred. At that time some negotiation was pending between him and the Royal Institution, which ended in their engaging him to deliver a course of lectures on Poetry and the Fine Arts, during the ensuing winter. For this series (twelve or sixteen, I think,) he received a sum of one hundred guineas. And considering the slightness of the pains which he bestowed upon them, he was well remunerated. I fear that they did not increase his reputation; for never did any man treat his audience with less respect, or his task with less careful attention. I was in London for part of the time, and can report the circumstances, having made a point of attending duly at the appointed hours. Coleridge was at that time living uncomfortably enough at the *Courier* Office, in the Strand. In such a situation, annoyed by the sound of feet passing his chamber door continually to the printing rooms of this great establishment, and with no gentle ministrations of female hands to sustain his cheerfulness, naturally enough his spirits flagged; and he took more than ordinary doses of opium. I called upon him daily,

and pitied his forlorn condition. There was no bell in the room, which for many months answered the double purpose of bed-room and sitting-room. Consequently, I often saw him, picturesquely enveloped in night-caps, surmounted by handkerchiefs indorsed upon handkerchiefs, shouting from the attics of the *Courier* Office, down three or four flights of stairs, to a certain 'Mrs Bainbridge,' his sole attendant, whose dwelling was in the subterranean regions of the house. There did I often see the philosopher, with a most lugubrious face, invoking with all his might this uncouth name of 'Bainbridge,' each syllable of which he intonated with long-drawn emphasis, in order to overpower the hostile hubbub coming downwards from the press, and the roar from the Strand, which entered at all the front windows. 'Mrs. Bainbridge! I say, Mrs. Bainbridge!' was the perpetual cry, until I expected to hear the Strand, and distant Fleet Street, take up the echo of 'Bainbridge!' Thus unhappily situated, he sank more than ever under the dominion of opium; so that, at two o'clock, when he should have been in attendance at the Royal Institution, he was too often unable to rise from bed. Then came dismissals of audience after audience with pleas of illness; and on many of his lecture days, I have seen all Albemarle Street closed by a 'lock' of carriages filled with women of distinction, until the servants of the Institution or their own footmen advanced to the carriage doors with the intelligence that Mr. Coleridge had been suddenly taken ill. This plea, which at first had been received with expressions of concern, repeated too often, began to rouse disgust. Some in anger, and some in real uncertainty whether it would not be trouble thrown away, ceased to attend. And we that were more constant, too often found reason to be disappointed with the quality of

his lecture. His appearance was generally that of a person struggling with pain and overmastering illness. His lips were baked with feverish heat, and often black in color; and in spite of the water which he continued drinking through the whole course of his lecture, he often seemed to labor under an almost paralytic inability to raise the upper jaw from the lower. In such a state it is clear that nothing could save the lecture itself from reflecting his own feebleness and exhaustion, except the advantage of having been precomposed in some happier mood. But that never happened: most unfortunately he relied upon his extempore ability to carry him through. Now, had he been in spirits, or had he gathered animation and kindled by his own motion, no written lecture could have been more effectual than one of his unpremeditated colloquial harangues. But either he was depressed originally below the point from which any re-ascent was possible, or else this re-action was intercepted by continual disgust, from looking back upon his own ill success; for assuredly he never once recovered that free and eloquent movement of thought which he could command at any time in a private company. The passages he read, moreover, in illustrating his doctrines, were generally unhappily chosen, because chosen at hap-hazard, from the difficulty of finding at a moment's summons, those passages which he had in his eye. Nor do I remember any that produced much effect, except two or three, which I myself put ready marked into his hands, among the Metrical Romances edited by Ritson.

Generally speaking, the selections were as injudicious and as inappropriate, as they were ill delivered; for amongst Coleridge's accomplishments good reading was not one; he had neither voice, nor management of voice. This defect is unfortunate in a public lecturer; for it is

inconceivable how much weight and effectual pathos can be communicated by sonorous depth, and melodious cadences of the human voice, to sentiments the most trivial; nor, on the other hand, how the grandest are emasculated by a style of reading, which fails in distributing the lights and shadows of a musical intonation. However, this defect chiefly concerned the immediate impression; the most afflicting to a friend of Coleridge's was the entire absence of his own peculiar and majestic intellect; no heart, no soul, was in anything he said; no strength of feeling in recalling universal truths: no power of originality or compass of moral relations in his novelties — all was a poor faint reflection from jewels once scattered in the highway by himself, in the prodigality of his early opulence — a mendicant dependence on the alms dropped from his own overflowing treasury of happier times. Such a collapse, such a quenching of the eagle's talons never was seen before. And as I returned from one of the most afflicting of these disappointments, I could not but repeat to myself part of that divine chorus, —

> 'Oh! dark, dark, dark, dark!
> Amid the blaze of noon
> Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,' &c. &c.

The next opportunity I had of seeing Coleridge was a the lakes, in the winter of 1809, and up to the autumn of the following year. During this period it was, that he carried on the original publication of '*The Friend*;' and for much the greater part of the time I saw him daily He lived as a visitor in the house occupied by Mr Wordsworth; this house was in Grasmere; and in another part of the same vale, at a distance of barely one mile, I myself had a cottage and a considerable library. Many

of my books being German, Coleridge borrowed them in great numbers. Having a general license from me to use them as he would, he was in the habit of accumulating them so largely at Allan Bank, (the name of Mr. Wordsworth's house,) that sometimes as many as five hundred were absent at once; which I mention, in order to notice a practice of Coleridge's indicating his very scrupulous honor, in what regarded the rights of ownership. Literary people are not always so strict in respecting property of this description; and I know more than one celebrated man, who professes as a maxim, that he holds it no duty of honor to restore a borrowed book; not to speak of many less celebrated persons, who, without openly professing such a principle, do, however, in fact, exhibit a lax morality in such cases. The more honorable it was to poor Coleridge, who had means so trifling of buying books for himself — that, to prevent my flocks from mixing, and being confounded with the flocks already folded at Allan Bank, (his own and Wordsworth's,) or rather that they *might* mix without danger, he duly inscribed my name in the blank leaves of every volume; a fact which became rather painfully made known to me; for, as he had chosen to dub me *Esquire*, many years after this, it cost myself and a female friend some weeks of labor to hunt out these multitudinous memorials, and to erase this heraldic addition — which else had the appearance to a stranger of having been conferred by myself.

The Friend, in its original publication, was, as a pecuniary speculation, the least judicious, both in its objects and its means, I have ever known. It was printed at Penrith, a town in Cumberland, on the outer verge of the lake district, and precisely twenty-eight miles removed from Coleridge's abode. This distance, enough of itself

in all conscience, was at least trebled in effect by the interposition of Kirkstone, a mountain which is scaled by a carriage ascent of three miles long, and so steep in parts, that, without four horses, no solitary traveller can persuade the neighboring innkeepers to carry him. Another road, by way of Keswick, is subject to its own separate difficulties. And thus in any practical sense, for ease, for certainty, and for dispatch, Liverpool, ninety-five miles distant, was virtually nearer. Dublin even, or Cork, was more eligible. Yet in this town, so situated as I have stated, by way of purchasing such intolerable difficulties at the highest price, Coleridge was advised, and actually persuaded to set up a printer, by buying types, &c., instead of resorting to some printer already established in Kendal, a large and opulent town, not more than eighteen miles distant, and connected by a daily post; whereas, between himself and Penrith there was no post at all. Building his mechanical arrangements upon this utter 'upside-down' inversion of all common sense, it is not surprising (as 'madness ruled the hour') that in all other circumstances of plan or execution, the work moved by principles of downright crazy disregard to all that a judicious counsel would have suggested. The subjects were generally chosen, obstinately in defiance of the popular taste; they were treated in a style which avowed contempt for the popular models; and the plans adopted for obtaining payment were of a nature to insure a speedy bankruptcy to the concern. Coleridge had a list, nobody could ever say upon whose authority gathered together, of subscribers. He tells us himself that many of these renounced the work from an early period; and some (as Lord Corke) rebuked him for his presumption in sending it unordered, but (as Coleridge asserts) neither returned the copies, nor remitted the price. And even

those who were conscientious enough to do this could not remit four or five shillings for as many numbers without putting Coleridge to an expense of treble postage at the least. This he complains of bitterly in his *Biographia Literaria*, forgetting evidently that the evil was due exclusively to his own defective arrangements. People necessarily sent their subscriptions through such channels as were open to them, or such as were pointed out by Coleridge himself. It is also utterly unworthy of Coleridge to have taxed, as he does, many (or all, for anything that appears,) of his subscribers with neglecting to pay at all. Probably nobody neglected. And, on the other hand, some, perhaps, as a most conscientious and venerable female relation of my own, who had subscribed merely to oblige me, and out of a general respect for Coleridge's powers, though finding nothing to suit her own taste: she, I happened to know, paid three times over, sending the money through three different channels according to the shifting directions which reached her. Managed as the reader will collect from these indications, the work was going down-hill from the first. It never gained any accessions of new subscribers: from what source, then, was the continual dropping off of names to be supplied? The printer became a bankrupt: Coleridge was as much in arrear with his articles, as with his lectures at the Royal Institution. That he was from the very first; but now he was disgusted and desponding; and with No. 28 the work came to a final stop. Some years after it was recast, as the phrase was, and republished. But, in fact, this recast was pretty nearly a new work. The sole contributor to the original work had been Wordsworth, who gave a very valuable paper on the principles concerned in the composition of Epitaphs;

and Professor Wilson, who, in conjunction with Mr. Blair an early friend, then visiting at his place on Windermere, wrote the letter signed *Mathetes*, the reply to which came from Mr. Wordsworth.

CHAPTER VIII

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

At the Lakes, and summoned abroad by scenery so exquisite — living, too, in the bosom of a family endeared to him by long friendship and sympathy the closest with all his propensities and tastes — Coleridge (it may be thought) could not sequester himself so profoundly as at the *Courier* Office within his own shell, or shut himself out so completely from that large dominion of eye and ear amongst the hills, the fields, and the woods, which once he had exercised so pleasantly to himself, and with a participation so immortal, through his exquisite poems, to all generations. He was not now reduced to depend upon 'Mrs. Bainbridge,' but looked out from his study windows upon the sublime hills of *Seat Sandal* and *Arthur's Chair*, and upon pastoral cottages at their feet; and all around him, he heard hourly the murmurings of happy life, the sound of female voices, and the innocent laughter of children. But, apparently, he was not happy himself: the accursed drug poisoned all natural pleasure at its sources; he burrowed continually deeper into scholastic subtleties and metaphysical abstraction, and, like that class described by Seneca, in the luxurious Rome of his days, he lived chiefly by candle-light. At two or three o'clock in the afternoon he would make his first appearance: through the silence of the night, when all other

lights had long disappeared, in the quiet cottage of Grasmere *his* lamp might be seen invariably by the belated traveller, as he descended the long steep from Dun-mail-raise; and at five or six o'clock in the morning, when man was going forth to his labor, this insulated son of reveries was retiring to bed.

Society he did not much court, because much was not to be had; but he did not shrink from any which wore the promise of novelty. At that time the leading person about the Lakes, as regarded rank and station, amongst those who had any connection with literature, was Dr. Watson, the well-known Bishop of Llandaff. This dignitary I knew myself as much as I wished to know him, having gone to his house five or six times purposely that I *might* know him: and I shall speak of him circumstantially. Those who have read his autobiography, or are otherwise acquainted with the outline of his career, will be aware that he was the son of a Westmoreland schoolmaster. Going to Cambridge, with no great store of classical knowledge, but with the more common accomplishment of Westmoreland men, and one better suited to Cambridge, viz. — a sufficient basis of mathematics, and a robust, though commonplace intellect, for improving his knowledge according to any direction which accident should prescribe — he obtained the Professorship of Chemistry without one iota of chemical knowledge up to the hour when he gained it: and then setting eagerly to work, that he might not disgrace the choice which had thus distinguished him, long before the time arrived for commencing his prelections, he had made himself capable of writing those beautiful essays on that science, which after a revolution, and a counter-revolution, so great as succeeding times have witnessed, still remain a cardinal book of introductory discipline to such studies; an opinion

authorized not only by Professor Thomson of Glasgow, but also, to myself, by the late Sir Humphry Davy. With this experimental proof that a Chemical Chair might be won and honored without previous knowledge, even of the chemical alphabet, he resolved to play the same feat with the Royal Chair of Divinity; one far more important for local honor, and for wealth. Here again he succeeded: and this time he extended his experiment; for whereas both Chairs had been won without *previous* knowledge, he resolved that in this case it should be maintained without *after* knowledge. He applied himself simply to the improvement of its income, which he raised from £300 to at least £1000 per annum. All this he had accomplished before reaching the age of thirty-five.

Riches are with us the parent of riches; and success, in the hands of an active man, is the pledge of further success. On the basis of this Cambridge preferment, Dr. Watson built upwards, until he had raised himself, in one way or other, to a seat in the House of Lords, and to a commensurate income. For the latter half of his life, he — originally a village schoolmaster's son — was able to associate with the *magnates* of the land, upon equal terms. And that fact, of itself, without another word, implies, in this country, a degree of rank and fortune which one would think a sufficient reward even for merit as unquestionable as was that of Dr. Watson. Yet he was always a discontented man, and a railer at the Government and the age which could permit merit such as his to pine away ingloriously, in one of the humblest amongst the bishoprics, with no other addition to its emoluments than the richest Professorship in Europe, and such other accidents in life as gave him in all, perhaps, not above seven thousand per annum! Poor man! — only seven thousand per annum! What a trial to a man's patience! — and

how much he stood in need of philosophy, or even of religion, to face so dismal a condition!

The Bishop was himself, in a secondary way, an interesting study. What I mean is, that, though originally the furthest removed from an interesting person, being a man remarkable indeed for robust faculties, but otherwise commonplace in his character, worldly-minded, and coarse, even to obtuseness, in his sensibilities, he yet became interesting from the strength of *degree* with which these otherwise repulsive characteristics were marked. He was one of that numerous order in whom even the love of knowledge is subordinate to schemes of advancement; and to whom even his own success, and his own honor consequent upon that success, had no higher value than according to their use as instruments for winning further promotion. Hence it was, that, when by such aids he had mounted to a certain eminence, beyond which he saw little promise of further ascent, by *their* assistance — since at this stage it was clear, that party connection in politics must become his main reliance — he ceased to regard his favorite sciences with much interest. Even chemistry was now neglected. This, above all, was perplexing to one who did not understand his character. For hither one would have supposed he might have retreated from his political disappointments, and have found a perpetual consolation in honors which no intrigues could defeat, and in the gratitude, so pure and untainted, which still attended the honorable exertions of his youth. But he viewed the matter in a very different light. Other generations had come since then, and 'other palms were won.' To keep pace with the advancing science, and to maintain his station amongst his youthful competitors, would demand a youthful vigor and motives such as theirs. But, as to himself, chemistry had given all it could give. Having

first raised himself to distinction by that, he had since married into an ancient family — one of the leaders amongst the landed aristocracy of his own county: — he thus had entitled himself to call the head of that family — a territorial potentate with ten thousand per annum — by the contemptuous sobriquet of 'Dull Daniel;' he looked down upon numbers whom, twenty years before, he scarcely durst have looked up to; he had obtained a bishopric. Chemistry had done all this for him; and had, besides, co-operating with luck, put him in the way of reaping a large estate from the gratitude and early death of a pupil, Mr. Luther. All this chemistry had effected: could chemistry do anything more? Clearly not. And here it was, that, having lost his motives for cultivating it farther, he regarded the present improvers of the science, not with the feelings natural to a disinterested lover of such studies on their own account, but with jealousy, as men who had eclipsed or had bedimmed his own once brilliant reputation. Two revolutions had occurred since his own 'palmy days;' Sir Humphry Davy might be right; and all might be gold that glistened; but, for his part, he was too old to learn new theories — he must be content to hobble to his grave with such old-fashioned creeds as had answered in his time, when, for aught he could see, men prospered as much as in this new-fangled world. This was the tone of his ordinary talk; and, in one sense — as regards personal claims, I mean — it was illiberal enough; for the leaders of modern chemistry never overlooked *his* claims. Professor Thomson, of Glasgow, always spoke of his 'Essays' as of a book which hardly any revolution could antiquate; and Sir Humphry Davy, in reply to a question which I put to him upon that point, in 1813, declared that he knew of no book better qualified, as one of introductory discipline

to the youthful experimenter, or as an apprenticeship to the taste in elegant selection of topics.

Yet querulous and discontented as the Bishop was, when he adverted either to chemistry or to his own position in life, the reader must not imagine to himself the ordinary 'complement' and appurtenances of that character — such as moroseness, illiberality or stinted hospitalities. On the contrary, his Lordship was a joyous, jovial, and cordial host. He was pleasant, and even kind in his manners; most hospitable in his reception of strangers, no matter of what party; and I must say that he was as little overbearing in argument, and as little stood upon his privilege as a church dignitary, as any 'big wig' I have happened to know. He was somewhat pompous, undoubtedly; but that, in an old academic hero, was rather agreeable, and had a characteristic effect. He listened patiently to all your objections; and, though steeped to the lips in prejudice, he was really candid. I mean to say, that although, generally speaking, the unconscious preoccupation of his understanding shut up all avenues to new convictions, he yet did his best to open his mind to any views that might be presented at the moment. And, with regard to his querulous egotism, though it may appear laughable enough to all who contrast his real pretensions with their public appreciation, as expressed in his acquired opulence and rank; and who contrast, also, his case with that of other men in his own profession — such as Paley for example — yet it cannot be denied that fortune had crossed his path, latterly, with foul winds, no less strikingly than his early life had been seconded by her favoring gales. In particular, Lord Holland* mentioned to a friend

* It was *Lady* Holland. I know not how I came to make such a mistake. And the friend was Wordsworth.

of my own the following anecdote: —'What you say of the Bishop may be very true: [they were riding past his grounds at the time, which had turned the conversation upon his character and public claims:] but to *us* [Lord Holland meant to the Whig party] he was truly honorable and faithful; insomuch, that my uncle had agreed with Lord Granville to make him Archbishop of York, *sede vacante;* — all was settled; and had we staid in power a little longer, he would, beyond a doubt, have had that dignity.'

Now, if the reader happens to recollect how soon the death of Dr. Markham followed the sudden dissolution of that short-lived administration in 1807, he will see how narrowly Dr. Watson missed this elevation; and one must allow for a little occasional spleen under such circumstances. Yet, what an archbishop! He talked openly, at his own table, as a Socinian; ridiculed the miracles of the New Testament, which he professed to explain as so many chemical tricks, or cases of politic legerdemain; and certainly had as little of devotional feeling as any man that ever lived. It is, by comparison, a matter of little consequence, that, in her spiritual integrity so little regarding the church of which he called himself a member, he should, in her temporal interests, have been ready to lay her open to any assaults from almost any quarter. He could naturally have little reverence for the rights of the shepherds, having so little for the pastoral office itself, or for the manifold duties it imposes. All his public, all his professional duties, he systematically neglected. He was a Lord in Parliament, and for many a year he never attended in his place: he was a Bishop, and he scarcely knew any part of his diocese by sight — living three hundred miles away from it: he was a Professor of Divinity; he held the richest Professorship in Europe, the

weightiest, for its functions, in England, — he drew, by his own admission, one thousand per annum from its endowments, (deducting some stipend to his *locum tenens* at Cambridge;) and for thirty years he never read a lecture, or performed a public exercise. Spheres how vast of usefulness to a man as able as himself! — subjects of what bitter anguish on the death-bed of one who had been tenderly alive to his own duties! In his political purism, and the unconscious partisanship of his constitutional scruples, he was a true Whig, and thoroughly diverting. That Lord Lonsdale or that the Duke of Northumberland should interfere with elections, *that* he thought scandalous and awful; but that a Lord of the house of Cavendish or Howard, a Duke of Devonshire or Norfolk, or an Earl of Carlisle, should traffic in boroughs, or exert the most despotic influence as landlords *mutato nomine*, he viewed as the mere natural right of property: and so far was he from loving the pure-hearted and unfactious champions of liberty, that, in one of his printed works, he dared to tax Milton with having knowingly, wilfully, deliberately told a falsehood.*

Coleridge, it was hardly possible, could reverence a man like this: — ordinary men might, because they were told that he had defended Christianity against the vile blasphemers and impotent theomichrists of the day. But Coleridge had too pure an ideal of a Christian philosopher, derived from the age of the English Titans in theology, to share in that estimate. It is singular enough, and interesting to a man who has ever heard Coleridge talk, but especially to one who has *assisted* (to speak in French

* This supposed falsehood respected the sect called Brownists, and occurs in the 'Defensis pro Pop. Anglicano.' The whole charge is a blunder, and rests upon the Bishop's own imperfect knowledge of Latinity.

phrase) at a talking party between Coleridge and the Bishop, to look back upon an article in the *Quarterly Review*, where, in conection with the Bishop's autobiography, some sneers are dropped with regard to the intellectual character of the neighborhood in which he had settled. I have been told, on pretty good authority, that this article was written by the late Dr. Whittaker, of Craven, the topographical antiquarian; a pretty sort of person, doubtless, to assume such a tone, in speaking of a neighborhood so dazzling in its intellectual pretensions, as that region at that time!

The Bishop had fixed his abode on the banks of Windermere. In a small but beautiful park, he had himself raised a plain, but handsome and substantial mansion: Calgarth, or Calgarth Park, was its name. Now, at Keswick lived Mr. Southey; twenty miles distant, it is true, but still, for a bishop with a bishop's equipage, not beyond a morning's drive. At Grasmere, about eight miles from Calgarth, were to be found Wordsworth and Coleridge. At Brathay, about four miles from Calgarth, lived Charles Lloyd; and he, far as he was below the others I have mentioned, could not in candor be considered a common man. He was somewhat too *Rousseauish;* but he had, in conversation, very extraordinary powers for analysis of a certain kind, applied to the philosophy of manners, and the most delicate *nuances* of social life; and his translation of 'Alfieri,' together with his own poems, shows him to have been an accomplished scholar. Then, not much above a mile from Calgarth, at his beautiful creation of Elleray, lived Professor Wilson, of whom I need not speak. He, in fact, and Mr Lloyd, were on the most intimate terms with the Bishop's family. The meanest of these persons was able to have 'taken the conceit' out of Mr. Dr. Whittaker, and all his tribe. But even in the

town of Kendal, about nine miles from Calgarth, there were many men of information, at least as extensive as Dr. Watson's, and amply qualified to have met him upon equal terms in conversation. Mathematics, it is well known, are extensively cultivated in the north of England. Sedburgh, for many years, was a sort of nursery, or rural Chapel-of-ease, to Cambridge. Gough, the blind mathematician and botanist of Kendal, was known to fame; but many others in that town had accomplishments equal to his; and, indeed, so widely has mathematical knowledge extended itself throughout Northern England, that even amongst the poor weavers, mechanic laborers for their daily bread, the cultivation of the geometrical analysis, in the most refined shape, has long prevailed; of which some accounts have been recently published. Some local pique, therefore, must have been at the bottom of Dr. Whittaker's sneer. At all events, it was ludicrously contrasted with the true state of the case, as brought out by the meeting between Coleridge and the Bishop.

Coleridge was armed, at all points, with the scholastic erudition which bore upon all questions that could arise in polemic divinity. The philosophy of ancient Greece, through all its schools, the philosophy of the Schoolmen, technically so called, church history, &c., Coleridge had within his call. Having been personally acquainted, or connected as a pupil, with Eichhorn and Michaelis, he knew the whole cycle of schisms and audacious speculations, through which Biblical criticism, or Christian philosophy, has revolved in Modern Germany. All this was ground upon which the Bishop of Llandaff trode with the infirm footing of a child. He listened to what Coleridge reported with the same sort of pleasurable surprise, alternating with starts of doubt or incredulity, as would natu-

rally attend a detailed report from Laputa, — which aerial region of speculation does but too often recur to a sober-minded person, in reading of the endless freaks in philosophy of modern Germany, where the sceptre of Mutability, the potentate celebrated by Spenser, gathers more trophies in a year, than elsewhere in a century; 'the anarchy of dreams' presiding in her philosophy; and the restless elements of opinion, throughout every region of debate, moulding themselves eternally, like the billowy sands of the desert, as beheld by Bruce, into towering columns, that soar upwards to a giddy altitude, then stalk about for a minute, all a-glow with fiery color, and finally unmould and 'dislimn,' with a collapse as sudden as the motions of that eddying breeze, under which their vapory architecture arose. Hartley and Locke, both of whom the Bishop made into idols, were discussed; especially the former, against whom Coleridge alleged some of those arguments which he has used in his *Biographia Literaria*. The Bishop made but a feeble defence; and, upon some points, none at all. He seemed, I remember, much struck with one remark of Coleridge's to this effect: — 'That, whereas Hartley fancied that our very reasoning was an aggregation, collected together under the law of association; on the contrary, we reason by counteracting that law, — just, said he, as in leaping, the law of gravitation concurs to that act in its latter part; but no leap could take place were it not by a counteraction of the law.' One remark of the Bishop's let me into the secret of his very limited reading. Coleridge had used the word 'apperception;' — apparently without intention; for, on hearing some objection to the word, as being 'surely not a word that Addison would have used,' he silently substituted another word. Some months afterwards, going with Charles Lloyd to call at Calgarth, during the time when

The Friend was appearing, the Bishop again noticed this obnoxious word, and in the very same terms: — 'Now, this word *apperception*, which Mr. Coleridge uses in the last number of *The Friend*, surely, surely it would not have been approved by Addison; no, Mr. Lloyd, nor by Swift; nor even, I think, by Arbuthnot.' Somebody suggested that the word was a new word of German mintage, and most probably due to Kant — of whom the Bishop seemed never to have heard. Meantime the fact was, and to me an amusing one, that the word had been commonly used by Leibnitz — who is really a *classical* author on such subjects.

In the autumn of 1810, Coleridge left the Lakes; and — so far as I am aware — for ever. I once, indeed, heard a rumor of his having passed through with some party of tourists — some reason struck me, at the time, for believing it untrue — but, at all events, he never returned to them as a resident. What might be his reason for this eternal self-banishment from scenes which he so well understood in all their shifting forms of beauty, I can only guess. Perhaps it was the very opposite reason to that which is most obvious: not possibly because he had become indifferent to their attractions, but because his undecaying sensibility to their commanding power, had become associated with too afflicting remembrances, and flashes of personal recollections, suddenly restored and illuminated — recollections which will

> 'Sometimes leap
> From hiding places ten years deep,'

and bring into collision the present with some long-forgotten past, in a form too trying and too painful for endurance. I have a brilliant Scotch friend, who cannot walk on the seashore — within sight of its αιηγοιδμοι

γελασμα, the multitudinous laughter of its waves, or within hearing of its resounding uproar, because they bring up, by links of old association, too insupportably to his mind, the agitations of his glittering, but too fervid youth. There is a feeling — morbid it may be, but for which no anodyne is found in all the schools from Plato to Kant — to which the human mind is liable at times: it is best described in a little piece by Henry More, the Platonist. He there represents himself as a martyr to his own too passionate sense of beauty, and his consequent too passionate sense of its decay. Everywhere — above, below, around him, in the earth, in the clouds, in the fields, and in their 'garniture of flowers' — he beholds a beauty carried to excess; and this beauty becomes a source of endless affliction to him, because everywhere he sees it liable to the touch of decay and mortal change. During one paroxysm of this sad passion, an angel appears to comfort him; and, by the sudden revelation of her immortal beauty, does, in fact, suspend his grief. But it is only a suspension; for the sudden recollection that her privileged condition, and her exemption from the general fate of beauty, is only by way of exception to a universal rule, restores his grief: 'And thou thyself,' he says to the angel, —

> 'And thou thyself, that com'st to comfort me,
> Wouldst strong occasion of deep sorrow bring,
> If thou wert subject to mortality!'

Every man, who has ever dwelt with passionate love upon the fair face of some female companion through life, must have had the same feeling; and must often, in the exquisite language of Shakspeare's sonnets, have commended and adjured all-conquering Time, there, at least, and upon that one tablet of his adoration,

> 'To write no wrinkle with his antique hand.'

Vain prayer! Empty adjuration! Profitless rebellion against the laws which season all things for the inexorable grave! Yet not the less we rebel again and again; and, though wisdom counsels resignation and submission, yet, our human passions, still cleaving to their object, force us into endless rebellion. Feelings, the same in kind as these, attach themselves to our mental powers, and our vital energies. Phantoms of lost power, sudden intuitions, and shadowy restorations of forgotten feelings, sometimes dim and perplexing, sometimes by bright but furtive glimpses, sometimes by a full and steady revelation, overcharged with light — throw us back in a moment upon scenes and remembrances that we have left full thirty years behind us. In solitude, and chiefly in the solitudes of nature; and, above all, amongst the great and *enduring* features of nature, such as mountains and quiet dells, and the lawny recesses of forests, and the silent shores of lakes, features with which (as being themselves less liable to change) our feelings have a more abiding association — under these circumstances it is, that such evanescent hauntings of our past and forgotten selves are most apt to startle and to waylay us. These are *positive* torments from which the agitated mind shrinks in fear; but there are others *negative* in their nature, that is, blank mementoes of power extinct, and of faculties burnt out within us. And from both forms of anguish — from this twofold scourge — poor Coleridge fled, perhaps, in flying from the beauty of external nature. In alluding to this latter, or negative form of suffering — that form, I mean, which presents not the too fugitive glimpses of past power, but its blank annihilation — Coleridge himself most beautifully insists upon, and illustrates the truth, that all which we find in Nature must be created by ourselves; and that alike

whether Nature is so gorgeous in her beauty as to seem apparelled in her wedding garment, or so powerless and extinct as to seem palled in her shroud — in either case,

'O, Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in *our* life alone does nature *live:*
Ours is her wedding garment, ours, her shroud.

'It were a vain endeavor,
Though I should gaze forever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from *outward* forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are *within.*'

This was one, and the most common shape of extinguished power, from which Coleridge fled to the great city. But sometimes the same decay came back upon his heart in the more poignant shape of intimations, and vanishing glimpses, recovered for one moment from the paradise of youth, and from the fields of joy and power, over which for him, too certainly, he felt that the cloud of night had settled for ever. Both modes of the same torment exiled him from nature; and for the same reason he fled from poetry and all commerce with his own soul; burying himself in the profoundest abstractions, from life and human sensibilities.

'For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient all I can;
And haply *by abstruse research to steal,*
From my own nature, all the natural man:
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part, infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.'

Such were, doubtless, the true and radical causes, which, for the final twenty-four years of Coleridge's life, drew him away from those scenes of natural beauty in which only, at an earlier stage of life, he found strength

and restoration. These were the *causes;* but the immediate *occasion* of his departure from the Lakes, in the autumn of 1800, was the favorable opportunity then presented to him of migrating in a pleasant way. Mr. Basil Montagu, the Chancery barrister, happened at that time to be returning to London with Mrs. Montagu, from a visit to the Lakes, or to Wordsworth. His travelling carriage was roomy enough to allow of his offering Coleridge a seat in it; and his admiration of Coleridge was just then fervent enough to prompt a friendly wish for that sort of close connection — viz. by domestication as a guest under Mr. Basil Montagu's roof — which is the most trying to friendship, and which, in this instance, led to a perpetual rupture of it. The domestic habits of eccentric men of genius, much more those of a man so irreclaimably irregular as Coleridge, can hardly be supposed to promise very auspiciously for any connection so close as this. A very extensive house and household, together with the unlimited license of action which belongs to the *ménage* of some great Dons amongst the nobility, could alone have made Coleridge an inmate perfectly desirable. Probably many little jealousies and offences had been mutually suppressed; but the particular spark which at length fell amongst the combustible materials already prepared, and thus produced the final explosion, took the following shape: — Mr. Montagu had published a book against the use of wine and intoxicating liquors of every sort. Not out of parsimony, or under any suspicion of inhospitality, but in mere self-consistency and obedience to his own conscientious scruples, Mr. Montagu would not countenance the use of wine at his own table. So far, all was right. But doubtless, on such a system, under the known habits of modern life, it should have been made a rule to ask no man to dinner:

for to force men, without warning, to a *single* (and, therefore, thoroughly useless) act of painful abstinence, is what neither I nor any man can have a right to do. In point of sense, it is in fact, precisely the freak of Sir Roger De Coverley, who drenches his friend the *Spectator* with a hideous decoction: not, as his confiding visitor had supposed, for some certain and immediate benefit to follow, but simply as having a *tendency* (if well supported by many years continuance of similar drenches) to abate the remote contingency of the stone. One day's abstinence could do no good on any scheme; and no man was likely to offer himself for a second. However, such being the law of the castle, and that law well known to Coleridge, he, nevertheless, thought fit to ask to dinner Colonel, then Captain Pasley, of the Engineers, well known in those days for his book on the Military Policy of England; and since, for his System of Professional Instruction. Now, where or in what land, abides that

'Captain, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,'

to whom wine in the analysis of dinner is a neutral or indifferent element? Wine, therefore, as it was not of a nature to be omitted, Coleridge took care to furnish at his own private cost. And so far, again, all was right. But, why must Coleridge give his dinner to the Captain in Mr. Montagu's house? There lay the affront; and, doubtless, it was a very inconsiderate act on the part of Coleridge. I report the case simply as it was then generally borne upon the breath, not of scandal, but of jest and merriment. The result, however, was no jest; for bitter words ensued — words that festered in the remembrance; and a rupture between the parties followed which no reconciliation ever healed.

Meantime, on reviewing this story, as generally adopted

by the learned in literary scandal, one demur rises up. Dr. Parr, a lisping old dotard, without dignity or power of mind of any sort, was a frequent and privileged inmate at Mr. Montagu's. Him, now, this Parr, there was no conceivable motive for enduring; that point is satisfactorily settled by the pompous inanities of his works. Yet, on the other hand, his habits were in their own nature far less endurable; for the monster smoked; — and how? How did the 'Birmingham Doctor'* smoke? Not as you or I, or other civilized people smoke, with a gentle cigar — but with shag tobacco. And those who know how that abomination lodges and nestles in the draperies of window curtains, will guess the horror and detestation in which the old Whig's memory is held by all enlightened women.

* '*Birmingham Doctor:*' — This was a *sobriquet* imposed on Dr. Parr by 'The Pursuits of Literature,' that most popular of satires at the end of the eighteenth and opening of the nineteenth centuries. The name had a mixed reference to the doctor's personal connection with Warwickshire, but chiefly to the doctor's spurious and windy imitation of Dr. Johnson. He was viewed as the Birming (or mock) Dr. Johnson. Why the word *Birmingham* has come for the last sixty or seventy years to indicate in every class of articles the spurious in opposition to the genuine, I suppose to have arisen from the Birmingham habit of reproducing all sorts of London or Paris trinkets, *bijouterie*, &c., in cheaper materials and with inferior workmanship.

CHAPTER IX.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

From Mr. Montagu's Coleridge passed, by favor of what introduction I never heard, into a family as amiable in manners and as benign in disposition, as I remember to have ever met with. On this excellent family I look back with threefold affection, on account of their goodness to Coleridge, and because they were then unfortunate, and because their union has long since been dissolved by death. The family was composed of three members: of Mr. M———, once a lawyer, who had, however, ceased to practise; of Mrs. M———, his wife, a blooming young woman, distinguished for her fine person; and a young lady, her unmarried sister. Here, for some years, I used to visit Coleridge; and, doubtless, as far as situation merely, and the most delicate attentions from the most amiable women, *could* make a man happy, he must have been so at this time; for both the ladies treated him as an elder brother, or as a father. At length, however, the cloud of misfortune, which had long settled upon the prospects of this excellent family, thickened; and I found, upon one of my visits to London, that they had given up their house in Berners Street, and had retired to a cottage in Wiltshire. Coleridge had accompanied them; and there I visited them myself, and, as it eventually proved, for the last time. Some time after this, I heard from Coleridge,

with the deepest sorrow, that poor M——— had been thrown into prison, and had sunk under the pressure of his misfortunes. The gentle ladies of his family had retired to remote friends; and I saw them no more, though often vainly making inquiries about them.

Coleridge, during this part of his London life, I saw constantly — generally once a day, during my own stay in London; and sometimes we were jointly engaged to dinner parties. In particular, I remember one party at which we met Lady Hamilton — Lord Nelson's Lady Hamilton — the beautiful, the accomplished, the enchantress! Coleridge admired her, as who would not have done, prodigiously; and she, in her turn, was fascinated with Coleridge. He was unusually effective in his display; and she, by way of expressing her acknowledgments appropriately, performed a scene in Lady Macbeth — how splendidly, I cannot better express, than by saying that all of us who then witnessed her performance, were familiar with Mrs. Siddons's matchless execution of that scene; and yet, with such a model filling our imaginations, we could not but acknowledge the possibility of another, and a different perfection, without a trace of imitation, equally original, and equally astonishing. The word 'magnificent' is, in this day, most lavishly abused: daily I hear or read in the newspapers of magnificent objects, as though scattered more thickly than blackberries; but for my part I have seen few objects really deserving that epithet. Lady Hamilton was one of them. She had Medea's beauty, and Medea's power of enchantment. But let not the reader too credulously suppose her the unprincipled woman she has been described. I know of no sound reason for supposing the connection between Lord Nelson and her to have been other than perfectly virtuous. Her public services, I am sure, were most eminent — for *that*

we have indisputable authority; and equally sure I am that they were requited with rank ingratitude.

After the household of the poor M———s had been dissolved, I know not whither Coleridge went immediately: for I did not visit London until some years had elapsed. In 1823–24, I first understood that he had taken up his residence as a guest with Mr. Gillman, a surgeon, in Highgate. He had then probably resided for some time at that gentleman's: there he continued to reside on the same terms, I believe, of affectionate friendship with the members of Mr. Gillman's family, as he had made life endurable to him in the time of the M———s; and there he died in July of the present year. If, generally speaking, poor Coleridge had but a small share of earthly prosperity, in one respect at least, he was eminently favored by Providence: beyond all men who ever perhaps have lived, he found means to engage a constant succession of most faithful friends; and he levied the services of sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, from the hands of strangers — attracted to him by no possible impulses but those of reverence for his intellect, and love for his gracious nature. How, says Wordsworth —

——'How can *he* expect that others should
Sow for him, reap for *him*, and at his call,
Love him, who for himself will take no thought at all?'

How can he, indeed? It is most unreasonable to do so: yet this expectation, if Coleridge ought not to have entertained, at all events he realized. Fast as one friend dropped off, another, and another, succeeded: perpetual relays were laid along his path in life, of judicious and zealous supporters: who comforted his days, and smoothed the pillow for his declining age, even when it was beyond all human power to take away the thorns which stuffed it.

And what *were* those thorns? — and whence derived? That is a question on which I ought to decline speaking, unless I could speak fully. Not, however, to make any mystery of what requires none, the reader will understand that *originally* his sufferings, and the death within him of all hope — the palsy, as it were, of that which is the life of life, and the heart within the heart — came from opium. But two things I must add — one to explain Coleridge's case, and the other to bring it within the indulgent allowance of equitable judges: — *First*, the sufferings from morbid derangements, originally produced by opium, had very possibly lost that simple character, and had themselves re-acted in producing secondary states of disease and irritation, not any longer dependent upon the opium, so as to disappear with its disuse: hence, a more than mortal discouragement to accomplish this disuse, when the pains of self-sacrifice were balanced by no gleams of restorative feeling. Yet, *secondly*, Coleridge did make prodigious efforts to deliver himself from this thraldom; and he went so far at one time in Bristol, to my knowledge, as to hire a man for the express purpose, and armed with the power of resolutely interposing between himself and the door of any druggist's shop. It is true, that an authority derived only from Coleridge's will, could not be valid against Coleridge's own counter determination: he could resume as easily as he could delegate the power. But the scheme did not entirely fail: a man shrinks from exposing to another that infirmity of will which he might else have but a feeble motive for disguising to himself; and the delegated man, the external conscience, as it were, of Coleridge, though destined — in the final resort, if matters came to absolute rupture, and to an obstinate duel, as it were, between himself and his principal — in that extremity to give way, yet might have

long protracted the struggle, before coming to that sort of *dignus vindice nodus:* and in fact, I know, upon absolute proof, that, before reaching that crisis, the man showed fight; and, faithful to his trust, and comprehending the reasons for it, he declared that if he must yield, he would 'know the reason why.'

Opium, therefore, subject to the explanation I have made, was certainly the original source of Coleridge's morbid feelings, of his debility, and of his remorse. His pecuniary embarrassments pressed as lightly as could well be expected upon him. I have mentioned the annuity of £150 made to him by the two Wedgwoods. One half, I believe, could not be withdrawn, having been left by a regular testamentary bequest. But the other moiety, coming from the surviving brother, was withdrawn on the plea of commercial losses, somewhere, I think, about 1815. That would have been a heavy blow to Coleridge; and assuredly the generosity is not very conspicuous, of having ever suffered an allowance of that nature to be left to the mercy of accident. Either it ought not to have been granted in that shape — viz. as an *annual* allowance, giving ground for expecting its periodical recurrence — or it ought not to have been withdrawn. However, this blow was broken to Coleridge by the bounty of George IV., who placed Coleridge's name in the list of twelve, to whom he granted an annuity of 100 guineas per annum. This he enjoyed so long as that Prince reigned. But at length came a heavier blow than that from Mr. Wedgwood: a new King arose, who knew not Joseph. Yet surely *he* was not a King who could so easily resolve to turn adrift twelve men of letters, many of them most accomplished men, for the sake of appropriating a sum no larger to himself than 1200 guineas — no less to some of them than the total freight of their

earthly hopes? — No matter: let the deed have been from whose hand it might, it was done: εἰργασται it was perpetrated, as saith the Medea of Euripides; and it will be mentioned hereafter, 'more than either once or twice.' It fell with weight, and with effect upon the latter days of Coleridge; it took from him as much heart and hope as at his years, and with his unworldly prospects, remained for man to blight: and, if it did not utterly crush him, the reason was — because for himself he had never needed much, and was now continually drawing near to that haven, in which, for himself, he would need nothing; secondly, because his children were now independent of his aid; and, finally, because in this land there are men to be found always of minds large enough to comprehend the claims of genius, and with hearts, by good luck, more generous, by infinite degrees, than the hearts of Princes.

Coleridge, as I now understand, was somewhere about sixty-two years of age when he died. This, however, I take upon the report of the public newspapers; for I do not, of my own knowledge, know anything accurately upon that point. * * * *

It can hardly be necessary to inform any reader of discernment or of much practice in composition, that the whole of this article upon Mr. Coleridge, though carried through at intervals, and (as it has unexpectedly happened) with time sufficient to have made it a very careful one, has, in fact, been written in a desultory and unpremeditated style. It was originally undertaken on the sudden but profound impulse communicated to the writer's feelings, by the unexpected news of this great man's death; partly, therefore, to relieve by expressing his own deep sentiments of reverential affection to his memory and partly, in however imperfect a way, to meet the

public feeling of interest or curiosity about a man who had long taken his place amongst the intellectual *potentates* of the age. Both purposes required that it should be written almost *extempore:* the greater part was really and unaffectedly written in that way, and under circumstances of such extreme haste, as would justify the writer in pleading the very amplest privilege of license and indulgent construction which custom concedes to such cases. Hence it had occurred to the writer, as a judicious principle, to create a sort of merit out of his own necessity; and rather to seek after the graces which belong to the epistolary form, or to other modes of composition professedly careless, than after those which grow out of preconceived biographies, which, having originally settled their plan upon a regular foundation, are able to pursue a course of orderly development, such as *his* slight sketch had voluntarily renounced from the beginning. That mode of composition having been once adopted, it seemed proper to sustain it, even after delays and interruption had allowed time for throwing the narrative into a more orderly movement, and modulating, as it were, into a key of the usual solemnity. The *qualis ab incepto processerit* — the *ordo* prescribed by the first bars of the music predominated over all other considerations, and to such an extent, that he had purposed to leave the article without any regular termination or summing up — as, on the one hand, scarcely demanded by the character of a sketch so rapid and indigested, whilst, on the other, he was sensible that anything of so much pretension as a formal peroration, challenged a sort of consideration to the paper which it was the author's chief wish to disclaim. That effect, however, is sufficiently parried by the implied protest now offered; and, on other reasons, it is certainly desirable that a general glance, however cursory, should

be thrown over the intellectual claims of Mr. Coleridge, by one who knew him so well, and especially in a case where those very claims constitute the entire and sole justification of the preceding personal memoir. That which furnishes the whole moving reason for any separate notice at all, and forms its whole latent interest, ought not, in mere logic, to be left without some notice itself, though as rapidly executed as the previous biographical sketch, and, from the necessity of the subject, by many times over more imperfect.

To this task, therefore, the writer now addresses himself; and by way of gaining greater freedom of movement, and of resuming his conversational tone, he will here again take the liberty of speaking in the first person.

If Mr. Coleridge had been merely a scholar — merely a philologist — or merely a man of science — there would be no reason apparent for travelling in our survey beyond the field of his intellect, rigorously and narrowly so called. But because he was a poet, and because he was a philosopher, in a comprehensive and a most *human* sense, with whose functions the moral nature is so largely interwoven, I shall feel myself entitled to notice the most striking aspects of his *character*, (using that word in its common limited meaning,) of his disposition, and his manners, as so many reflex indications of his intellectual constitution. But let it be well understood that I design nothing elaborate, nothing comprehensive or ambitious: my purpose is merely to supply a few hints and suggestions drawn from a very hasty retrospect, by way of adding a few traits to any outline which the reader may have framed to himself, either from some personal knowledge, or from more full and lively memorials.

One character, in which Mr. Coleridge most often came

before the public, was that of politician. In this age of fervent partisanship, it will, therefore, naturally occur as a first question, to inquire after his party and political connections: was he Whig, Tory, or Radical? Or, under a new classification, were his propensities Conservative or Reforming? I answer that, in any exclusive or emphatic sense, he was none of these; because, as a philosopher, he was, according to circumstances, and according to the object concerned, all of these by turns. These are distinctions upon which a cloud of delusion rests. It would not be difficult to show, that in the speculations built upon the distinction of Whig and Tory, even by as philosophic a politician as Edmund Burke, there is an oversight of the largest practical importance. But the general and partisan use of these terms superadds to this πρωτον Ψευδος a second which is much more flagrant. It is this: the terms Whig or Tory, used by partisans, are taken *extra gradum*, as expressing the ideal or extreme cases of the several creeds; whereas, in actual life, few such cases are found realized, by far the major part of those who answer to either one or the other denomination making only an approximation (differing by infinite degrees) to the ideal or abstract type. A third error there is, relating to the actual extent of the several denominations, even after every allowance made for the faintest approximations. Listen to a Whig, or to a Tory, and you will suppose that the great bulk of society range under his banner: all, at least, who have any property at stake. Listen to a Radical, and you will suppose that all are marshalled in the same ranks with himself, unless those who have some private interest in existing abuses, or have aristocratic privileges to defend. Yet, upon going extensively into society as it is, you find that a vast majority of good citizens are of no party whatsoever, own

no party designation, care for no party interest, but carry their good wishes by turns to men of every party, according to the momentary purpose they are pursuing. As to Whig and Tory, it is pretty clear that only two classes of men, both of limited extent, acknowledge these as their distinctions; first, those who make politics in some measure their profession or trade — whether by standing forward habitually in public meetings as leaders or as assistants, or by writing books and pamphlets in the same cause; secondly, those whose rank, or birth, or position in a city, or a rural district, almost pledge them to a share in the political struggles of the day, under the penalty of being held *fainéans*, truants, or even malignant recusants, if they should decline a warfare which often, perhaps, they do not love in secret. These classes, which, after all, are not numerous, and not entirely sincere, compose the whole extent of professing Whigs and Tories who make any approach to the standards of their two churches; and, generally speaking, these persons have succeeded to their politics and their party ties, as they have to their estates, viz. by inheritance. Not their way of thinking in politics has dictated their party connections; but these connections, traditionally bequeathed from one generation to another, have dictated their politics.

With respect to the Radical or the Reformer, the case is otherwise; for, it is certain, that in this, as in every great and enlightened nation, enjoying an intense and fervid communication of thought through the press, there is, and must be, a tendency widely diffused to the principles of sane reform — an anxiety to probe and examine all the institutions of the land by the increasing lights of the age — and a salutary determination that no acknowledged abuse shall be sheltered by prescription, or privileged by its antiquity. In saying, therefore, that *his*

principles are spread over the length and breadth of the land, the Reformer says no more than the truth. *Whig* and *Tory*, as usually understood, express only two modes of aristocratic partisanship: and it is strange, indeed, to find people deluded by the notion that the reforming principle has any more natural connection with the first than the last. *Reformer*, on the other hand, to a certain extent expresses the political creed and aspect of almost every enlightened citizen: but, then, how? Not as the *Radical* would insinuate, as pledging a man to a specific set of objects, or to any visible and apparent party, having known leaders and settled modes of action. British society, in its large majority, may be fairly described as *Reformers*, in the sense of being favorably disposed to a general spirit of ventilation and reform carried through all departments of public business, political or judicial; but it is so far from being, therefore, true that men, in general, are favorably disposed to any known party, in or out of Parliament, united for certain objects and by certain leaders, that, on the contrary, this reforming party itself has no fixed unity, and no generally acknowledged heads. It is divided both as to persons and as to things: the ends to be pursued create as many schisms, as the course of means proper for the pursuit, and the choice of agents for conducting the public wishes. In fact, it would be even more difficult to lay down the ideal standard of a Reformer, or his abstract creed, than of a Tory: and supposing this done, it would be found, in practice, that the imperfect approximations to the pure faith would differ by even broader shades, as regarded the reforming creed, than as regarded that of the rigorous or ultra Tory.

With respect to Mr. Coleridge, he was certainly a friend to all enlightened reforms; he was a friend, for example,

to Reform in Parliament. Sensible, as he was, of the prodigious diffusion of knowledge and good sense amongst the classes immediately below the gentry in British society, he could not but acknowledge their right to a larger and a less indirect share of political influence. As to the plan, and its extent, and its particular provisions, upon those he hesitated and wavered; as other friends to the same views have done, and will continue to do. The only *avowed* objects of modern Reformers which he would strenuously have opposed, nay, would have opposed with the zeal of an ancient martyr, are those which respect the Church of England, and, therefore, most of those which respect the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There he would have been found in the first ranks of the Anti-Reformers. He would also have supported the House of Peers as the tried bulwark of our social interests in many a famous struggle, and sometimes, in the hour of need, the sole barrier against despotic aggressions on the one hand, and servile submissions on the other. Moreover, he looked with favor upon many modes of aristocratic influence as balances to new-made commercial wealth, and to a far baser tyranny likely to arise from that quarter when unbalanced. But allowing for these points of difference, I know of little else stamped with the general seal of modern reform, and claiming to be a privileged object for a national effort, which would not have had his countenance. It is true, and this I am sensible will be objected, that his party connections were chiefly with the Tories; and it adds a seeming strength to this objection, that these connections were not those of accident, nor those which he inherited, nor those of his youthful choice. They were sought out by himself, and in his maturer years; or else they were such as sought *him* for the sake of his political principles; and equally,

in either case, they argued some affinity in his political creed. This much cannot be denied. But one consideration will serve greatly to qualify the inference from these facts. In those years when Mr. Coleridge became connected with Tories, what was the predominating and cardinal principal of Toryism, in comparison with which all else was willingly slighted? Circumstances of position had thrown upon the Tories the *onus* of a great national struggle, the greatest which history anywhere records, and with an enemy the most deadly. The Whigs were then out of power: they were therefore in opposition; and that one fact, the simple fact, of holding an anti-ministerial position, they allowed, by a most fatal blunder, to determine the course of their foreign politics. Napoleon was to be cherished simply because he was a thorn in Mr. Pitt's side. So began their foreign policy — and in that pettiest of personal views. Because they were anti-ministerial, they allowed themselves passively to become anti-national. To be a Whig, therefore, in those days, implied little more than a strenuous opposition to foreign war — to be a Tory, pledged a man to little more than war with Napoleon Bonaparte.

And this view of our foreign relations it was that connected Coleridge with Tories — a view which arose upon no motives of selfish interest, (as too often has been said in reproach,) but upon the changes wrought in the spirit of the French Republic, which gradually transmuted its defensive warfare (framed originally to meet a conspiracy of kings crusading against the new-born democracy of French institutions, whilst yet in their cradle) into a warfare of aggression and sanguinary ambition. The military strength evoked in France by the madness of European kings, had taught her the secret of her own power — a secret too dangerous for a nation of vanity so

infinite, and so feeble in all means of moral self-restraint. The temptation to foreign conquest was too strong for the national principles; and, in this way, all that had been grand and pure in the early pretensions of French Republicanism rapidly melted away before the common bribes of vulgar ambition. Unoffending states, such as Switzerland, were the first to be trampled under foot; no voice was heard any more but the brazen throat of war;' and after all that had been vaunted of a golden age, and a long career opened to the sceptre of pure political justice, the clouds gathered more gloomily than ever; and the sword was once more reinstated, as the sole arbiter of right, with less disguise and less reserve than under the vilest despotism of kings. The change was in the French Republicans, not in their foreign admirers; they, in mere consistency, were compelled into corresponding changes, and into final alienation of sympathy, as they beheld, one after one, all titles forfeited, by which that grand explosion of pure democracy had originally challenged and sustained their veneration. The mighty Republic had now begun to revolve through those fierce transmigrations foreseen by Burke, to every one of which, by turns, he had denounced an inevitable 'purification by fire and blood:' no trace remained of her primitive character: and of that awful outbreak of popular might, which once had made France the land of hope and promise to the whole human race, and had sounded a knell to every form of oppression or abuse, no record was to be found, except in the stupendous power which cemented its martial oligarchy. Of the people, of the democracy — or that it had ever for an hour been roused from its slumbers — one sole evidence remained; and that lay in the blank power of destruction, and its perfect organization, which none but a popular movement, no power short of that, could have

created. The people having been unchained, and, as if for the single purpose of creating a vast system of destroying energies, had then immediately recoiled within their old limits, and themselves become the earliest victim of their own statocracy. In this way France had become an object of jealousy and alarm. It remained to see to what purpose she would apply her new energies. That was soon settled; her new-born power was wielded from the first by unprincipled and by ambitious men; and, in 1800, it fell under the permanent control of an autocrat, whose unity of purpose, and iron will, left no room for any hope of change.

Under these circumstances, under these prospects, coupled with this retrospect, what became the duty of all foreign politicians? of the English above all, as natural leaders in any hopeful scheme of resistance? The question can scarcely be put with decency. Time and season, place or considerations of party, all alike vanished before an elementary duty to the human race, which much transcended any duty of exclusive patriotism. Plant it, however, on that narrower basis, and the answer would have been the same for all centuries, and for every land under a corresponding state of circumstances. Of Napoleon's real purposes there cannot *now* be any reasonable doubt. His confessions — and, in particular, his indirect revelations at St. Helena — have long since removed all demurs or scruples of scepticism. For England, therefore, as in relation to a man bent upon her ruin, all distinctions of party were annihilated — Whig and Tory were merged and swallowed up in the transcendent duties of patriots — Englishmen — lovers of liberty. Tories, *as* Tories, had here no peculiar or separate duties — none which belonged to their separate creed in politics. Their duties were paramount; and their partisanship had here

no application — was perfectly indifferent, and spoke neither this way or that. In one respect only they had peculiar duties, and a peculiar responsibility; peculiar, however, not by any difference of quality, but in its supreme degree; the same duties which belonged to all, belonged to them by a heavier responsibility. And how, or why? Not *as* Tories had they, or could they have any functions at all applying to this occasion; it was as being then the ministerial party, as the party accidentally in power at the particular crisis: in *that* character it was that they had any separate or higher degree of responsibility; otherwise, and as to the *kind* of their duty apart from this degree, the Tories stood in the same circumstances as men of all other parties. To the Tories, however, as accidentally in possession of the supreme power, and wielding the national forces at that time, and directing their application — to them it was that the honor belonged of making a beginning: on them had devolved the privilege of opening and authorizing the dread crusade. How and in what spirit they acquitted themselves of that most enviable task — enviable for its sanctity — fearful for the difficulty of its adequate fulfilment — how they persevered — and whether, at any crisis, the direst and most ominous to the righteous cause, they faltered or gave sign of retreating — history will tell — history has already told.

To the Whigs belonged the duty of seconding their old antagonists: and no wise man could have doubted, that, in a case of transcendent patriotism, where none of those principles could possibly apply, by which the two parties were divided and distinguished, the Whigs would be anxious to show that, for the interests of their common country, they could cheerfully lay aside all those party distinctions, and forget those feuds which now had no

pertinence or meaning. Simply as Whigs, had they stood in no other relation, they probably would have done so. Unfortunately, however, for their own good name and popularity in after times, they were divided from the other party, not merely as Whigs opposed to Tories, but also upon another and a more mortifying distinction, which was not, like the first, a mere inert question of speculation or theory, but involved a vast practical difference of honors and emoluments: — they were divided, I say, on another and more vexatious principle, as the *Outs* opposed to the *Ins*. Simply as Whigs, they might have coalesced with the Tories *quoad hoc*, and merely for this one purpose. But as men *out* of power, they could not coalesce with those who were *in*. They constituted 'his Majesty's Opposition;' and, in a fatal hour, they determined that it was fitting to carry on their general scheme of hostility even into this sacred and privileged ground. That resolution once taken, they found it necessary to pursue it with zeal. The case itself was too weighty and too interesting to allow of any moderate tone for the abetters or opposers. Passion and personal bitterness soon animated the contest: violent and rash predictions were hazarded — prophecies of utter ruin and of captivity for our whole army were solemnly delivered: and it soon became evident, as indeed mere human infirmity made it beforehand but too probable, that where so much personal credit was at stake upon the side of our own national dishonor, the wishes of the prophet had been pledged to the same result as the credit of his political sagacity. Many were the melancholy illustrations of the same general case. Men were seen fighting against the evidences of some great British victory with all the bitterness and fierce incredulity which usually meet the first rumors of some private calamity: that was in

effect the aspect in their eyes of each national triumph in its turn. Their position, connected with the unfortunate election made by the Whig leaders of their tone, from the very opening of the contest, gave the character of a calamity for them and for their party, to that which to every other heart in Britain was the noblest of triumphs in the noblest of causes; and, as a party, the Whigs mourned for years over those events which quickened the pulses of pleasure and sacred exultation in every other heart. God forbid that all Whigs should have felt in this unnatural way! I speak only of the tone set by the Parliamentary leaders. The few who were in Parliament, and exposed to daily taunts from the just exultation of their irritated opponents, had their natural feelings poisoned and envenomed. The many who were out of Parliament, and not personally interested in this warfare of the Houses, were left open to natural influences of patriotic pride, and to the contagion of public sympathy: and these, though Whigs, felt as became them.

These are things too unnatural to be easily believed; or, in a land where the force of partisanship is less, to be easily understood. Being true, however, they ought not to be forgotten: and at present it is almost necessary that they should be stated for the justification of Coleridge. Too much has been written upon this part of his life, and too many reproaches thrown out upon his levity or his want of principle in his supposed sacrifice of his early political connections, to make it possible for any reverencer of Coleridge's memory to pass over the case without a full explanation. That explanation is involved in the strange and scandalous conduct of the Parliamentary Whigs. Coleridge passed over to the Tories only in that sense in which all patriots did so at that time, and in relation to our great *foreign* interest — viz. by refusing to

accompany the Whigs in their almost perfidious demeanor towards Napoleon Bonaparte. Anti-*ministerial* they affect to style their policy, but in the most eminent sense it was anti-*national*. It was thus far — viz. exclusively, or almost exclusively, in relation to our great feud with Napoleon — that Coleridge adhered to the Tories. But because this feud was so capital and so earth-shaking a quarrel, that it occupied all hearts and all the councils of Christendom, suffering no other question almost to live in its neighborhood, hence it happened that he who acceded to the Tories in this one chapter of their policy, was regarded as an ally in the most general sense. Domestic politics were then, in fact, forgotten; no question, in any proper sense a Tory one, ever arose in that era; or, if it had, the public attention would not have settled upon it; and it would speedily have been dismissed.

Hence I deduce as a possibility, and, from my knowledge of Coleridge, I deduce it as a fact, that his adhesion to the Tories was bounded by his approbation of their foreign policy; and even of *that* — rarely in its executive details, rarely even in its military plans, (for these he assailed with more keenness of criticism than to me the case seemed to justify,) but solely in its animating principle — its moving and sustaining force, viz. the doctrine and entire faith that Napoleon Bonaparte ought to be resisted, was not a proper object of diplomacy or negotiation, and could be resisted hopefully and triumphantly. Thus far he went along with the Tories: in all else he belonged quite as much to other parties — so far as he belonged to any. And that he did not follow any bias of private interest in connecting himself with Tories, or rather in allowing Tories to connect themselves with him, appears (rather more indeed than it ought to have appeared) on the very surface of his life. From Tory

munificence he drew nothing at all, unless it should be imputed to his Tory connections that George IV. selected him for one of his academicians. But this slight mark of royal favor, he owed, I believe, to other considerations and I have reason to think that this way of treating political questions, so wide of dogmatism, and laying open so vast a field to scepticism that might else have gone unregarded, must have been held as evidence of too latitudinarian a creed to justify a title to Toryism. And, upon the whole, I am of opinion, that few events of Mr. Coleridge's life were better calculated to place his disinterested pursuit of truth in a luminous aspect. In fact, his carelessness of all worldly interests was too notorious to leave him open to suspicions of that nature: nor was this carelessness kept within such limits as to be altogether meritorious. There is no doubt that his indolence concurred, in some degree, to that line of conduct and to that political reserve which would, at all events, have been pursued, in a degree beyond what honor the severest, or delicacy the most nervous, could have enjoined.

It is a singular anecdote, after all, to report of Coleridge, who incurred the reproach of having *ratted* solely by his inability to follow the friends of his early days into what his heart regarded as a monstrous and signal breach of patriotism, that in any eminent sense he was *not* a patriot. His understanding in this, as in many instances, was too active, too restless, for any abiding feelings to lay hold of him, unless when they coincided with some palpable command of nature. Parental love, for instance, was too holy a thing to be submitted for an instant to any scrutiny or any jealousy of his hair-splitting understanding But it must be something as sacred and as profound as that which with Coleridge could long support the endless attrition of his too active intellect. In this instance, he

had the same defect, derived in part from the same cause, as a contemporary, one of the idols of the day, more celebrated, and more widely celebrated, than Coleridge, but far his inferior in power and compass of intellect. I speak of Goethe: he also was defective, and defective under far stronger provocations and excitement, in patriotic feeling. He cared little for Weimar — and less for Germany. And he was, thus far, much below Coleridge — that the passion, which he could not feel, Coleridge yet obliged himself practically to obey in all things which concerned the world; whereas, Goethe disowned this passion equally in his acts — his words — and his writings. Both are now gone — Goethe and Coleridge; both are honored by those who knew them, and by multitudes who did not. But the honors of Coleridge are perennial, and will annually grow more verdant; whilst from those of Goethe every generation will see something fall away, until posterity will wonder at the subverted idol, whose basis being hollow and unsound, will leave the worship of their fathers an enigma to their descendants.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In 1807 it was, at the beginning of winter, that I first saw William Wordsworth. I have already mentioned that I had introduced myself to his notice by letter as early as the spring of 1803. To this hour it has continued, I believe, a mystery to Wordsworth, why it was that I suffered an interval of four and a half years to slip away before availing myself of the standing invitation with which I had been honored to the poet's house. Very probably he accounted for this delay by supposing that the new-born liberty of an Oxford life, with its multiplied enjoyments, acting upon a boy just emancipated from the restraints of a school, and, in one hour, elevated into what we Oxonians so proudly and so exclusively *

* At the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where the town is viewed as a mere ministerial appendage to the numerous colleges — the civic Oxford, for instance, existing for the sake of the academic Oxford, and not *vice versa* — it has naturally happened that the students honor with the name of '*a man*,' him only who wears a cap and gown. The word is not used with any reference to physical powers, or to age; but simply to the final object for which the places are supposed to have first arisen, and to maintain themselves. There is, however, a ludicrous effect produced, in some instances, by the use of this term in contradistinguishing parties. 'Was he a man?' is a frequent question; and *as* frequent in the mouth of a stripling under nineteen, speaking, perhaps, of a huge, elderly tradesman — 'Oh, no! not a man at all.'

denominate a 'man,' might have tempted me into pursuits alien from the pure intellectual passions which had so powerfully mastered my youthful heart some years before. Extinguished such a passion could not be; nor could he think, if remembering the fervor with which I had expressed it, the sort of 'nympholepsy' which had seized upon me, and which, in some imperfect way, I had avowed with reference to the very origin of lakes and mountains, amongst which the scenery of this most original poetry had chiefly grown up and moved. The very names of the ancient hills — Fairfield, Seat Sandal, Helvellyn, Blencathara, Glaramara; of the sequestered glens — such as Borrowdale, Martindale, Mardale, Wasdale, and Ennerdale; but, above all, the shy pastoral recesses, not gairishly in the world's eye, like Windermere, or Derwentwater, but lurking half unknown to the traveller of that day — Grasmere, for instance, the lovely abode of the poet himself, solitary, and yet sowed, as it were, with a thin diffusion of humble dwellings — here a scattering, and there a clustering, as in the starry heavens — sufficient to afford, at every turn and angle, human remembrances and memorials of time-honored affections, or of passions, (as the 'Churchyard amongst the Mountains' will amply demonstrate) — not wanting even in scenic and tragical interest: — these were so many local spells upon me, equally poetic and elevating with the Miltonic names of Valdarno and Vallombrosa, whilst, in addition to that part of their power, they had a separate fascination, under the anticipation that very probably I might here form personal ties which would for ever connect me with their sweet solitudes by powers deep as life and awful as death.

Oh! sense of mysterious pre-existence, by which, through years in which as yet a stranger to these valleys

of Westmoreland, I viewed myself as a phantom-self — a second identity projected from my own consciousness, and already living amongst them! — how was it, and by what prophetic instinct, that already I said to myself oftentimes, when chasing day-dreams along the pictures of these wild mountainous labyrinths, which as yet I had not traversed — Here, in some distant year, I shall be shaken with love, and there with stormiest grief? — whence was it that sudden revelations came upon me, like the drawing-up of a curtain, and closing again as rapidly, of scenes that made the future heaven of my life? — and how was it that in thought I *was* and yet in reality was *not* a denizen, already, in 1803, 1804, 1805, of lakes and forest lawns which I never saw till 1807? — and that, by a prophetic instinct of the heart, I rehearsed and lived over, as it were, in vision, those chapters of my life which have carried with them the weightiest burthen of joy and sorrow, and by the margin of those very lakes and hills with which I prefigured this connection? — and, in short, that for me, by a transcendent privilege, during the novitiate of my life, most truly I might say —

'In To-day already walked To-morrow?'

Deep are the voices which seem to call, deep is the lesson which would be taught even to the most thoughtless of men, by 'any gladsome field of earth' which he may chance to traverse, if (according to the supposition * of Wordsworth) that field, so gay to him,

'Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod.'

* See the divine passage in 'The Excursion,' beginning —

'Ah! what a lesson for a thoughtless man,
If any gladsome field of earth,' &c.

But, if this recall of the real be affecting, much more so to me is this aerial and shadowy anticipation of the future, when looked back upon from far distance through a multitude of years, and when confirmed for the great outlines of its sketches by the impassioned experience of life. *Why* I should have done so, I can hardly say; but that I did — even before I had visited Grasmere, and whilst it was almost certain, from the sort of channel in which my life seemed destined to flow, that London would be the central region of my hopes and fears — even then I turned to Grasmere and its dependencies as knit up, in some way as yet unknown, with my future destinies. Of this, were it not that it would wear a superstitious air, I could mention a very memorable proof from the records of my life in 1804, full three and a half years before I saw Grasmere. However, I allude to that fact in this place by way of showing that Oxford had not weaned my thoughts from the northern mountains and their great inhabitants; and that my delay was due to anything rather than to waning interest. On the contrary, the real cause of my delay was the too great profundity, and the increasing profundity, of my interest in this regeneration of our national poetry; and the increasing awe, in due proportion to the decaying thoughtlessness of boyhood, which possessed me for the character of its author. So far from neglecting Wordsworth, it is a fact (and Professor Wilson — who, without knowing me in those or for many subsequent years, shared my feelings towards both the poetry and the poet — has a story of his own experience, somewhat similar, to report) — it is a fact, I say, that twice I had undertaken a long journey expressly for the purpose of paying my respects to Wordsworth: twice I came so far as the little rustic inn (at that time the sole inn of the neighborhood) at Church Coniston — the village which

stands at the north-western angle of Coniston Water; and on neither occasion could I summon confidence enough to present myself before him. It was not that I had any want of proper boldness for facing the most numerous company of a mixed or ordinary character: reserved indeed I was, and too much so, perhaps even shy — from the character of my mind, so profoundly meditative, and the character of my life, so profoundly sequestered: but still, from counteracting causes, I was not deficient in a reasonable self-confidence towards the world generally. But the very image of Wordsworth, as I prefigured it to my own planet-struck eye, crushed my faculties as before Elijah or St. Paul. Twice, as I have said, did I advance as far as the Lake of Coniston, which is about eight miles from the church of Grasmere, and once I absolutely went forwards from Coniston to the very gorge of Hammerscar, from which the whole vale of Grasmere suddenly breaks upon the view in a style of almost theatrical surprise, with its lovely valley stretching in the distance, the lake lying immediately below, with its solemn boat-like island of five acres in size, seemingly floating on its surface; its exquisite outline on the opposite shore, revealing all its little bays* and wild sylvan margin, feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns. In one quarter, a little wood, stretching for about half a mile towards the outlet of the lake, more directly in opposition to the spectator; a few green fields; and beyond them, just two bowshots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents, rising above it to the height of more

* All which inimitable graces of nature have, by the hands of mechanic art, by solid masonry, by whitewashing, &c., been exterminated as a growth of weeds and nuisances for thirty good years. — *August* 17, 1853.

than three thousand feet. That little cottage was Wordsworth's from the time of his marriage, and earlier — in fact, from the beginning of the century to the year 1808. Afterwards, for many a year, it was mine. Catching one hasty glimpse of this loveliest of landscapes, I retreated like a guilty thing, for fear I might be surprised by Wordsworth, and then returned faint-heartedly to Coniston, and so to Oxford, *re infectâ*.

This was in 1806. And thus far, from mere excess of nervous distrust in my own powers for sustaining a conversation with Wordsworth, I had, for nearly five years, shrunk from a meeting for which, beyond all things under heaven, I longed. These, the reader will say, were foolish feelings. Why, yes; perhaps they were; but they had a laudable foundation; for I carried my modesty to a laughable excess undoubtedly; but yet it *was* modesty which co-operated with other feelings to produce my foolish panic. I had lived in profounder solitude than can have fallen to the lot of many people, which arose from the unusual defect of sympathy I found in all around me; and this solitude gave a preternatural depth to my master feelings, which originally were deep enough, and, to speak phrenologically, the organ of veneration must have received an inordinate development in my case. However, say what one can for it, no doubt my conduct was very absurd; and I began to think so myself. I fancied continually a plain, honest, old relative saying to me — 'Let the man be a god even, he will show himself very little of a good one if he is not satisfied with a devotion such as yours. You offer him almost a blamable adoration. What more can he require? And if more he *does* require, hang me if I would't think myself too good for any man's scorn; and, after one trial of it, I would wish him good morning for ever.' Still I witnessed a case

where a kind of idol had, after all, rejected an idolator that did not offer a splendid triumph to his pride; and with the additional cruelty of slighting this worshipper in behalf of one more brilliant, who seemed in great doubt whether he should admire or not. And, although I thought better of Mr. Wordsworth's moral nature than to suppose it possible for him to err in this extent, or even with this kind of insolence, yet I could not reconcile myself to the place of an humble admirer, valued, perhaps, for the right direction of his feelings, but practically neglected in behalf of some more gifted companion, who might have the power (which much I feared that I should never have) of talking to him on something like equal terms, as respected the laws and principles of poetry. I could bear well enough to be undervalued, or even openly scorned; for, said I to myself, it is the lot of every man in this world to be scorned by somebody; and also, to balance that misfortune, every man has a chance of one worshipper. 'I,' says Sir Andrew Aguecheek — 'I was adored once.' Yes, even Aguecheek had his one adorer; and there is not that immeasurable fool in this world, but that (according to La Fontaine's consolatory doctrine) he has a fair chance for finding '*un plus grand sot que luimême.*'

But with all this equanimity in my expectation and demands, philosophically as I could have reconciled myself to contempt, there was a limit. People there were in this world whose respect I could not dispense with: people also there *have been* in this world (alas! alas!) whose love was to me no less indispensable. Have it I must, or life would have had no value in my eyes. Was I then so deficient in conversational power that I could not hope to acquit myself respectably? In that respect, it is a singularity in which (if I may presume, even for a defect, to compare myself with so great a man)

I resembled Wordsworth — namely, that in early youth I labored under a peculiar embarrassment and penury of words, when I sought to convey my thoughts adequately upon interesting subjects: neither was it words only that I wanted: but I could not unravel, I could not even make perfectly conscious to myself, or properly arrange the subsidiary thoughts into which one leading thought often radiates; or, at least, I could not do this with anything like the rapidity requisite for conversation. I labored like a Sybil instinct with the burden of prophetic wo, as often as I found myself dealing with any topic in which the understanding combined with deep feelings to suggest mixed and tangled thoughts: and thus partly — partly also from my invincible habit of reverie — at that era of my life, I had a most distinguished talent '*pour le silence.*' Wordsworth, from something of the same causes, suffered (by his own report to myself) at the same age from pretty much the same infirmity. And yet, in more advanced years — probably about twenty-eight or thirty — both of us acquired a remarkable fluency in the art of unfolding our thoughts colloquially. However, at that period my deficiencies were what I have described. And after all, though I had no absolute cause for anticipating contempt, I was so far right in my fears, that since that time I have had occasion to perceive a worldly tone of sentiment in Wordsworth, not less than in Mrs. Hannah More and other literary people, by which they were led to set a higher value upon a limited respect from a person high in the world's esteem, than upon the most lavish spirit of devotion from an obscure quarter. Now, in that point, my feelings are far otherwise; and, though it is praising myself to say so, yet say it I must, because it is mere truth — that, if a fool were so far to honor me as to profess, in Sir Andrew Aguecheek's phrase, even to 'adore' me

— yes, though it were Sir Andrew himself — I should say, 'My poor fool! thy adoration will do me but little good in this world; yet, to know that thy whole heart's wealth is given up to me, that forces me to value thy homage more than I would that of Solomon in all his glory.'

Meantime, the world went on; events kept moving: and, amongst them, in the course of 1807, occurred the event of Mr. Coleridge's return to England from his official station in the Governor's family at Malta; my introduction to his acquaintance at Bridgewater, where he was then (summer of 1807) visiting, together with his family, amongst old Somersetshire friends; his subsequent journey to Bristol, near which (at the Hot Wells) I was then staying with a female relation; and, finally, upon discovering that he was anxious to put his wife and children under some friendly escort, on their return homewards to Keswick, (he himself being summoned to execute an engagement to lecture at the Royal Institution during the coming winter,) I offered to unite with Mrs. Coleridge in a post-chaise to the north. My offer was readily accepted, and, at the latter end of October, we set forwards — Mrs. Coleridge, viz. with her two surviving sons — Hartley, aged nine, the oldest; Derwent, about seven — her beautiful little daughter,* about five; and, finally, myself. Going by the direct route through Gloucester, Bridge-

* That most accomplished, and to Coleridge most pious daughter, whose recent death afflicted so very many who knew her only by her writings. She had married her cousin, Mr. Sergeant Coleridge, and in that way retained her illustrious maiden name as a wife. At seventeen, when last I saw her, she was the most perfect of all pensive, nun-like, intellectual beauties that I have seen in real breathing life. The upper parts of her face were verily divine. See, for an artist's opinion, the Life of that admirable man Collins, by his son.

water, &c. on the third day we reached Liverpool, where I took up my quarters at a hotel, whilst Mrs. Coleridge paid a visit of a few days to a very interesting family, friends of Southey. These were the Misses Koster, daughters of an English gold merchant of celebrity, who had recently quitted Portugal on the approach of the French army under Junot. Mr. Koster did me the honor to call at my quarters, and invite me to his house; an invitation which I very readily accepted, and had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted with a family the most accomplished I had ever known. At dinner, there appeared only the family party, several daughters, and one son, a fine young man of twenty, but who was *consciously* dying of asthma. Mr. Koster, the head of the family, was distinguished for his good sense and practical information; but, in Liverpool, still more so by his eccentric and obstinate denial of certain notorious events; in particular, he denied that any such battle as Talavera had ever been fought, and had a large wager depending upon the result. His house was the resort of distinguished foreigners; and, on the first evening of my dining there, as well as afterwards, I there met, for the first time and for the last, that marvel of women, Madame Catalini. I had heard her repeatedly; but never before been near enough to see her smile and converse — even to be honored with a smile myself. She and Lady Hamilton were the most effectively brilliant women I ever saw. However, on this occasion the Misses Koster outshone even la Catalini; to her they talked in the most fluent Italian; to some foreign men, in Portuguese; to one in French; and to most of the party in English; and each, by turns, seemed to be their native tongue. Nor did they shrink, even in the presence of the mighty enchantress and syren, from exhibiting their musical skill.

From Liverpool, after about a week's delay, we pursued our journey northwards. We had slept on the first day at Lancaster. Consequently, at the rate of motion which then prevailed throughout England — which, however was rarely equalled on that road, where all things were in arrear by comparison with the eastern and southern roads of the kingdom — we naturally enough found ourselves about three o'clock in the afternoon, at Ambleside, fourteen miles to the north of Kendal, and thirty-six from our sleeping quarters. There, for the last time, we stopped to change horses, a ceremony which then took half an hour; and, about four o'clock, we found ourselves on the summit of the White Moss, a hill which rises between the second and third mile-stones on the stage from Ambleside to Keswick, and which then retarded the traveller's advance by a full fifteen minutes, but is now evaded by a lower line of road. In ascending this hill, from weariness of moving so slowly, I, with the two Coleridges, had alighted; and, as we all chose to stretch our legs by running down the hill, we had left the chaise behind us, and had even lost the sound of the wheels at times, when all at once we came, at an abrupt turn of the road, in sight of a white cottage, with two solemn yew-trees breaking the glare of its white walls. A sudden shock seized me on recognizing this cottage, of which, in the previous year, I had gained a momentary glimpse from Hammerscar, on the opposite side of the lake. I paused, and felt my old panic returning upon me; bu just then, as if to take away all doubt upon the subject, I saw Hartley Coleridge, who had gained upon me considerably during my pause of hesitation, suddenly turn in at a garden gate; and, just then, the chaise, which had been rattling furiously down the descent, according to the invariable practice of Westmoreland drivers, (for it

Westmoreland they never lock down the steepest descents, and therefore rightly keep up their horses at a flying gallop,) suddenly turned a corner of the road and came into sight: at the same moment Mrs. Coleridge waved her hand from one of the front windows; and the direction of this motion to the right, at once confirmed me in my belief that here at last we had reached our port; that this little cottage was tenanted by that man whom, of all the men from the beginning of time, I most fervently desired to see; that, in less than a minute, I should meet Wordsworth face to face. Coleridge was of opinion that, if a man were really and *consciously* to see an apparition — supposing, I mean, the case to be a physical possibility that a spiritual essence should be liable to the action of material organs — in such circumstances death would be the inevitable result; and, if so, the wish which we hear so commonly expressed for such experience is as thoughtless as that of Semele in the Grecian mythology, so natural in a female, that her lover should visit her *en grand costume*, and 'with his tail on' — presumptuous ambition, that unexpectedly wrought its own ruinous chastisement! Judged by Coleridge's test, my situation could not have been so terrific as *his* who anticipates a ghost — for, certainly, I survived this meeting; but, at that instant, it seemed pretty much the same to my own feelings.

Never before or since can I reproach myself with having trembled at the approaching presence of any creature that is born of woman, excepting only, for once or twice in my life, woman herself; now, however, I *did* tremble; and I forgot, what in no other circumstances I could have forgotten, to stop for the coming up of the chaise, that I might be ready to hand Mrs. Coleridge out. Had Charlemagne and all his Peerage been behind me, or Cæsar and his equipage, or Death on his pale horse,

I should have forgotten them at that moment of intense expectation, and of eyes fascinated to what lay before me, or what might in a moment appear. Through the little gate I pressed forward; ten steps beyond it lay the principal door of the house. To this, no longer clearly conscious of my own feelings, I passed on rapidly; I heard a step, a voice, and, like a flash of lightning, I saw the figure emerge of a tallish man, who held out his hand, and saluted me with the most cordial manner, and the warmest expression of friendly welcome, that it is possible to imagine. The chaise, however, drawing up to the gate at that moment, he (and there needed no Roman nomenclator, to tell me that this *he*, the owner of this noble countenance, was Wordsworth,) felt himself summoned as master of the hospitalities on the occasion, to advance and receive Mrs. Coleridge. I, therefore, stunned almost with the actual accomplishment of a catastrophe so long anticipated and so long postponed, mechanically went forward into the house. A little semi-vestibule between two doors prefaced the entrance into what might be considered the principal room of the cottage. It was an oblong square, not above eight and a half feet high, sixteen feet long, and twelve broad; very prettily wainscoted from the floor to the ceiling with dark polished oak, slightly embellished with carving. One window there was — a perfect and unpretending cottage window, with little diamond panes, embowered, at almost every season of the year, with roses; and, in the summer and autumn, with a profusion of jessamine and other fragrant shrubs. From the exuberant luxuriance of the vegetation around 't, and from the dark hue of the wainscoting, this window, though tolerably large, did not furnish a very powerful light to one who entered from the open air. However, I saw sufficiently to be aware of two ladies just entering the

room, from a doorway opening upon a little staircase The foremost, a tall young woman, with the most winning expression of benignity upon her features that I had ever beheld, made a slight curtsey, and advanced to me, presenting her hand with so frank an air that all embarrassment must have fled in a moment, before the native goodness of her manner. This was Mrs. Wordsworth, cousin of the poet; and, for the last five years or more, his wife. She was now mother of two children, a son and a daughter; and she furnished a remarkable proof how possible it is for a woman neither handsome nor even comely, according to the rigor of criticism — nay, generally pronounced very plain — to exercise all the practical power and fascination of beauty, through the mere compensatory charms of sweetness all but angelic, of simplicity the most entire, womanly self-respect, and purity of heart speaking through all her looks, acts, and movements. *Words*, I was going to have added; but her words were few. In reality, she talked so little, that Mr. Slave-Trade Clarkson used to say of her that she could only say '*God bless you!*' Certainly her intellect was not of an active order; but, in a quiescent, reposing, meditative way, she appeared always to have a genial enjoyment from her own thoughts; and it would have been strange indeed if she, who enjoyed such eminent advantages of training, from the daily society of her husband and his sister, not only hearing the best parts of English literature daily read, or quoted by short fragments, but also hearing them very often critically discussed in a style of great originality and truth, and by the light of strong poetic feeling — strange it would have been had any person, though dull as the weeds of Lethe in the native constitution of his mind, failed to acquire some power of judging for himself, and putting forth some functions of activity. But undoubtedly

that was not her element: to feel and to enjoy in a luxurious repose of mind — there was her *forte* and her peculiar privilege; and how much better this was adapted to her husband's taste, how much more adapted to uphold the comfort of his daily life, than a blue-stocking loquacity, or even a legitimate talent for discussion and analytic skill, may be inferred from his celebrated verses, beginning —

> 'She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleam'd upon my sight;'

and ending with this matchless winding up of an intellectual homage, involving a description of an almost ideal wife —

> 'A perfect woman, nobly plann'd
> To warn, to comfort, to command;
> And yet' —

going back to a previous thought, and resuming a leading impression of the whole character —

> 'And yet a spirit too, and bright
> With something of an angel light.'

From these verses, I say, it may be inferred what were the qualities which won Wordsworth's admiration in a wife; for these verses were written upon Mary Hutchinson, his own cousin, and his wife; and not written, as Coleridge's moveable verses upon '*Sara*,' for some forgotten original Sara, and subsequently transferred to every other Sara who came across his path. Once for all,* these exquisite lines were dedicated to Mrs. Wordsworth; were understood to describe her — to have been prompted by

* *Once for all*, I say — on recollecting that Coleridge's verses to *Sara* were made transferable to any Sara who reigned at the time. At least three Saras appropriated them; all three long since in the grave.

the feminine graces of her character; hers they are, and will remain for ever. To these, therefore, I may refer the reader for an idea, by infinite degrees more powerful and vivid than I could give him, of what was most important in the partner and second self of the poet. And I shall add to this abstract of her *moral* portrait these few concluding traits of her appearance in a physical sense. She was tall — that I have already said; her figure was good — except that, for my taste, it was rather too slender, and so it always continued. In complexion she was fair; and there was something peculiarly pleasing even in this accident of the skin, for it was accompanied by an animated expression of health, a blessing which, in fact, she possessed uninterruptedly, very pleasing in itself, and also a powerful auxiliary of that smiling benignity which constituted the greatest attraction of her person. 'Her eyes' — the reader may already know — 'her eyes' —

> 'Like stars of twilight fair;
> Like twilight, too, her dark brown hair;
> But all things else about her drawn
> From May-time and the cheerful dawn.'

But strange it is to tell that, in these eyes of vesper gentleness, there was a considerable obliquity of vision; and much beyond that slight obliquity which is often supposed to be an attractive foible of the countenance: and yet, though it *ought* to have been displeasing or repulsive, in fact it was not. Indeed all faults, had they been ten times more and greater, would have been swallowed up or neutralized by that supreme expression of her features, to the intense unity of which every lineament in the fixed parts, and every undulation in the moving parts, or play of her countenance, concurred — viz. a sunny benignity — a radiant gracefulness — such as in this world I never saw equalled or approached.

Here, then, the reader has a sketch of Mrs. Wordsworth. Immediately behind her, moved a lady, much shorter, much slighter, and perhaps, in all other respects, as different from her in personal characteristics as could have been wished, for the most effective contrast. 'Her face was of Egyptian brown;' rarely, in a woman of English birth, had I seen a more determinate gipsy tan. Her eyes were not soft, as Mrs. Wordsworth's, nor were they fierce or bold; but they were wild and startling, and hurried in their motion. Her manner was warm and even ardent; her sensibility seemed constitutionally deep; and some subtle fire of impassioned intellect apparently burned within her, which, being alternately pushed forward into a conspicuous expression by the irrepressible instincts of her temperament, and then immediately checked, in obedience to the decorum of her sex and age, and her maidenly condition, (for she had rejected all offers of marriage, out of pure sisterly regard to her brother and his children,) gave to her whole demeanor and to her conversation, an air of embarrassment and even of self-conflict, that was sometimes distressing to witness. Even her very utterance and enunciation often, or rather generally, suffered in point of clearness and steadiness, from the agitation of her excessive organic sensibility, and, perhaps, from some morbid irritability of the nerves. At times, the self-counteraction and self-baffling of her feelings caused her even to stammer, and so determinately to stammer, that a stranger who should have seen her and quitted her in that state of feeling, would have certainly set her down for one plagued with that infirmity of speech, as distressingly as Charles Lamb himself. This was Miss Wordsworth, the only sister of the poet — his 'Dorothy;' who naturally owed so much to the life-long intercourse with her great brother, in his most solitary

and sequestered years; but, on the other hand, to whom he has acknowledged obligations of the profoundest nature; and, in particular, this mighty one, through which we also, the admirers and the worshippers through every age of this great poet, are become equally her debtors — that whereas the intellect of Wordsworth was, by its original tendencies, too stern — too austere — too much enamored of an ascetic harsh sublimity, she it was — the lady who paced by his side continually through sylvan and mountain tracks, in Highland glens, and in the dim recesses of German charcoal-burners — that first *couched* his eye to the sense of beauty — humanized him by the gentler charities, and engrafted, with her delicate female touch, those graces upon the ruder growths of his nature, which have since clothed the forest of his genius with a foliage corresponding in loveliness and beauty to the strength of its boughs and the massiveness of its trunks. The greatest deductions from Miss Wordsworth's attractions, and from the exceeding interest which surrounded her in right of her character, her history, and the relation which she fulfilled towards her brother, was the glancing quickness of her motions, and other circumstances in her deportment, (such as her stooping attitude when walking,) which gave an ungraceful, and even an unsexual character to her appearance when out of doors. She did not cultivate the graces which preside over the person and its carriage. But, on the other hand, she was a person of very remarkable endowments intellectually; and, in addition to the other great services which she rendered to her brother, this I may mention, as greater than all the rest, and it was one which equally operated to the benefit of every casual companion in a walk — viz. the exceeding sympathy, always ready and always profound, by which she made all that one could tell her, all that one could

describe, all that one could quote from a foreign author, reverberate as it were *à plusieurs reprises*, to one's own feelings by the manifest impression it made upon her. The pulses of light are not more quick or more inevitable in their flow and undulation, than were the answering and echoing movements of her sympathizing attention. Her knowledge of literature was irregular, and not systematically built up. She was content to be ignorant of many things; but what she knew and had really mastered, lay where it could not be disturbed — in the temper of her own most fervid heart. In whatever I say or shall say of Miss Wordsworth, the reader may understand me to have the entire sanction and concurrence of Professor Wilson. We both knew Miss Wordsworth well; and we heartily agreed in admiring her.

Such were the two ladies, who, with himself and two children, and at that time one servant, composed the poet's household. They were both somewhere about twenty-eight years old; and if the reader inquires about the single point which I have left untouched in their portraiture — viz. the style of their manners — I may say that it was in *some* points, naturally of a plain household simplicity, but everyway pleasing, unaffected, and (as respects Mrs. Wordsworth) even dignified. Few persons had seen so little as this lady of the world. She had seen nothing of high life, for she had seen none at all. Consequently, she was unacquainted with the conventional modes of behavior, prescribed in particular situations by high breeding. But, as these modes are little more than the product of dispassionate good sense, applied to the circumstances of the case, it is surprising how few deficiencies are perceptible, even to the most vigilant eye — or, at least, essential deficiencies — in the general demeanor of any unaffected young woman, acting habitually under a

sense of sexual dignity, courtesy, pure tastes, and elegant enjoyments, assisted by the daily counsel and revision of a masculine intellect, in the person of a brother or a husband. Miss Wordsworth had seen most of life, and even of good company; for she had lived, when quite a girl, under the protection of a near relation at Windsor, who was a personal favorite of the royal family, and especially of George III. Consequently she ought to have been the more polished of the two; and yet, from greater natural aptitudes for refinement of manner in her sister-in-law, and partly, perhaps, from her more quiet and subdued manner. Mrs. Wordsworth would have been pronounced the more ladylike person.

From the interest which attaches to every person so nearly connected as these two ladies with a great poet, I have allowed myself a larger latitude than else might have been justifiable in describing them. I now go on with my narrative: —

I was ushered up a little flight of stairs, fourteen in all, to a little dining-room, or whatever the reader chooses to call it. Wordsworth himself has described the fire-place of this as his

'Half-kitchen and half-parlor fire,'

It was not fully seven feet six inches high, and, in other respects, pretty nearly of the same dimensions as the rustic hall below. There was, however, in a small recess, a library of perhaps three hundred volumes, which seemed to consecrate the room as the poet's study and composing room; and so occasionally it was. But far oftener he both studied, as I found, and composed on the high road. I had not been two minutes at the fireside, when in came Wordsworth, returning from his friendly attentions to the travellers below, who, it seemed, had been over-persuaded by hospitable solicitations to stay

for this night in Grasmere, and to make out the remaining thirteen miles of their road to Keswick on the following day. Wordsworth entered. And '*what-like*' — to use a Westmoreland, as well as a Scottish expression — '*what-like*' was Wordsworth? A reviewer in *Tait's Magazine*,* in noticing some recent collection of literary portraits, gives it as his opinion that Charles Lamb's head was the finest amongst them. This remark may have been justified by the engraved portraits; but, certainly, the critic would have cancelled it had he seen the original heads — at least, had he seen them in youth or in maturity; for Charles Lamb bore age with less disadvantage to the intellectual expression of his appearance than Wordsworth, in whom a sanguine, or rather coarse complexion, (or rather not complexion, properly speaking, so much as texture of flesh,) has, of late years, usurped upon the original bronze-tint and finer skin; and this change of hue and change in the quality of skin, has been made fourfold more conspicuous, and more unfavorable in its general effect, by the harsh contrast of grizzled hair which has displaced the original brown. No change in personal appearance can ever have been so unfortunate; for, generally speaking, whatever other disadvantages old age may bring along with it, one effect, at least, in male subjects, has a compensating tendency — that it removes any tone of vigor too harsh, and mitigates the expression of power too unsubdued. But, in Wordsworth, the effect of the change has been to substitute an air of animal vigor, or, at least, hardiness, as if derived from constant exposure to the wind and weather, for the fine, sombre complexion which he once had, resembling that of a Venetian senator or a Spanish monk.

* Vol. IV., page 793, (Dec. 1837.)

Here, however, in describing the personal appearance of Wordsworth, I go back, of course, to the point of time at which I am speaking. To begin with his figure: — Wordsworth was, upon the whole, not a well-made man. His legs were pointedly condemned by all the female connoisseurs in legs that ever I heard lecture upon that topic; not that they were bad in any way which *would* force itself upon your notice — there was no absolute deformity about them; and undoubtedly they had been serviceable legs beyond the average standard of human requisition; for I calculate, upon good data, that with these identical legs Wordsworth must have traversed a distance of 175 to 180,000 English miles — a mode of exertion which, to him, stood in the stead of wine, spirits, and all other stimulants whatsoever to the animal spirits; to which he has been indebted for a life of unclouded happiness, and we for much of what is most excellent in his writings. But, useful as they have proved themselves, the Wordsworthian legs were certainly not ornamental; and it was really a pity, as I agreed with a lady in thinking, that he had not another pair for evening dress parties — when no boots lend their friendly aid to masque our imperfections from the eyes of female rigorists — the *elegantes formarum spectatrices*. A sculptor would certainly have disapproved of their contour. But the worst part of Wordsworth's person was the bust: there was a narrowness and a droop about the shoulders which became striking, and had an effect of meanness when brought into close juxtaposition with a figure of a most statuesque order. Once on a summer morning, walking in the vale of Langdale with Wordsworth, his sister, and Mr. J——, native Westmoreland clergyman, I remember that Miss Wordsworth was positively mortified by the peculiar illustration which settled upon this defective conformation.

Mr. J——, a fine towering figure, six feet high, massy and columnar in his proportions, happened to be walking, a little in advance, with Wordsworth; Miss Wordsworth and myself being in the rear; and from the nature of the conversation which then prevailed in our front rank, something or other about money, devises, buying and selling, we of the rear-guard thought it requisite to preserve this arrangement for a space of three miles or more; during which time, at intervals, Miss Wordsworth would exclaim, in a tone of vexation, 'Is it possible?—can that be William? How very mean he looks!' and could not conceal a mortification that seemed really painful, until I, for my part, could not forbear laughing outright at the serious interest which she carried into this trifle. She was, however, right as regarded the mere visual judgment. Wordsworth's figure, with all its defects, was brought into powerful relief by one which had been cast in a more square and massy mould; and in such a case it impressed a spectator with a sense of absolute meanness, more especially when viewed from behind, and not counteracted by his countenance; and yet Wordsworth was of a good height, just five feet ten, and not a slender man; on the contrary, by the side of Southey his limbs looked thick, almost in a disproportionate degree. But the total effect of Wordsworth's person was always worst in a state of motion; for, according to the remark I have heard from many country people, 'he walked like a cade'—a cade being some sort of insect which advances by an oblique motion. This was not always perceptible, and in part depended (I believe) upon the position of his arms; when either of these happened (as was very customary) to be inserted nto the unbuttoned waistcoat, his walk had a wry or twisted appearance; and not appearance only—for I

have known it, by slow degrees, gradually to edge off his companion from the middle to the side of the high-road.* Meantime, his face — that was one which would have made amends for greater defects of figure; it was certainly the noblest for intellectual effects that, in actual life, I have seen, or at least have consciously been led to notice. Many such, or even finer, I have seen amongst the portraits of Titian, and, in a later period, amongst those of Vandyke, from the great era of Charles I., as also from the court of Elizabeth and of Charles II.; but none which has so much impressed me in my own time.

Haydon, the eminent painter, in his great picture of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, has introduced Wordsworth in the character of a disciple attending his Divine Master. This fact is well known, and as the picture itself is tolerably well known to the public eye, there are multitudes now living who will have seen a very impressive likeness of Wordsworth — some consciously, some not suspecting it. There will, however, always be many who have *not* seen any portrait at all of Wordsworth; and therefore I will describe its general outline and effect. It was a face of the long order, often falsely classed as oval; but a greater mistake is made by many people in supposing the long face, which prevailed so remarkably in the Elizabethan and Carolinian periods, to have become extinct in our days. Miss Ferrier, in one of her brilliant novels, ('Marriage,' I think,) makes a Highland girl protest that 'no Englishman *with his round face*' shall ever wean her heart from her own country; but England is not the land of round faces — and those

* In our Westmoreland highroads, which are so fortunate as to have little breadth beyond that of lanes, there is no side-path, not even on approaching towns; consequently everybody walks at large upon the carriage track.

have observed little indeed who think so: France it is that grows the round face, and in so large a majority of her provinces, that it has become one of the national characteristics. And the remarkable impression which an Englishman receives from the prevalence of the eternal orb of the human countenance, proves of itself, without any *conscious* testimony, how the fact stands; in the blind sense of a monotony, in this respect not usual elsewhere, lies involved an argument that cannot be gainsaid Besides receiving this evidence from positive experience, even upon an *à priori* argument, how is it possible that the long face so prevalent in England, by all confession, in certain splendid eras of our history, should have had time, in some five or six generations, to grow extinct? Again, the character of face varies essentially in different provinces. Wales has no connection in this respect with Devonshire, nor Kent with Yorkshire, nor either with Westmoreland. England, it is true, tends beyond all known examples to a general amalgamation of differences by means of its unrivalled freedom of intercourse. Yet even in England, law and necessity have opposed as yet such and so many obstacles to the free diffusion of labor, that every generation occupies by at least five sixths of its numbers the ground of its ancestors.

The movable part of a population is chiefly the higher part; and it is the lower classes that, in every nation, compose the *fundus*, in which lies latent the national face as well as the national character. Each exists here in racy purity and integrity, not disturbed in the one by alien intermarriages, nor in the other by novelties of opinion or other casual effects derived from education and reading. Now, look into this *fundus*, and you will find, in many districts, no such prevalence of the round orbicular face as some people erroneously suppose: and

in Westmoreland especially, the ancient long face of the Elizabethan period, powerfully resembling in all its lineaments the ancient Roman face, and often (though not so uniformly) the face of northern Italy in modern times. The face of Sir Walter Scott, as Irving, the pulpit orator, once remarked to me, was the indigenous face of the Border: the mouth, which was bad, and the entire lower part of the face, are seen repeated in thousands of working men's; or, as Irving chose to illustrate his position, 'in thousands of Border horse-jockeys.' In like manner, Wordsworth's face was, if not absolutely the indigenous face of the Lake district, at any rate a variety of that face, a modification of that original type. The head was well filled out; and there, to begin with, was a great advantage over the head of Charles Lamb, which was absolutely truncated in the posterior region — sawn off, as it were, by no timid sawyer. The forehead was not remarkably lofty — and, by the way, some artists, in their ardor for realizing their phrenological preconceptions, not suffering nature to surrender quietly and by slow degrees, her own alphabet of signs, and characters, and hieroglyphical expressions, but forcing her language prematurely into a conformity with their own crude speculations, have given to Sir Walter Scott a pile of forehead which is unpleasing and cataphysical, in fact, a caricature of anything that is ever seen in nature, and would (if real) be esteemed a deformity; in one instance, that which was introduced in some annual or other, the forehead makes about two thirds of the entire face. Wordsworth's forehead is also liable to caricature misrepresentations, in these days of phrenology: but, whatever it may appear to be in any man's fanciful portrait, the real living forehead, as I have been in the habit of seeing it for more than five-and-twenty years, is not remarkable for its height; but it

is perhaps remarkable for its breadth and expansive development. Neither are the eyes of Wordsworth 'large,' as is erroneously stated somewhere in 'Peter's Letters;' on the contrary, they are (I think) rather small; but *that* does not interfere with their effect, which at times is fine and suitable to his intellectual character. At times, I say, for the depth and subtlety of eyes varies exceedingly with the state of the stomach; and, if young ladies were aware of the magical transformations which can be wrought in the depth and sweetness of the eye by a few weeks' walking exercise, I fancy we should see their habits in this point altered greatly for the better. I have seen Wordsworth's eyes oftentimes affected powerfully in this respect; his eyes are not, under any circumstances, bright, lustrous, or piercing; but, after a long day's toil in walking, I have seen them assume an appearance the most solemn and spiritual that it is possible for the human eye to wear. The light which resides in them is at no time a superficial light; but, under favorable accidents, it is a light which seems to come from depths below all depths; in fact, it is more truly entitled to be held 'The light that never was on land or sea,' a light radiating from some far spiritual world, than any the most idealizing light that ever yet a painter's hand created. The nose, a little arched, and large, which, by the way, (according to a natural phrenology, existing centuries ago amongst some of the lowest amongst the human species,) has always been accounted an unequivocal expression of animal appetites organically strong. And that was in fact the basis of Wordsworth's intellectual power: his intellectual passions were fervent and strong; because they rested upon a basis of animal sensibility superior to that of most men, diffused through *all* the animal passions (or appetites); and something of that will be found to hold of all poets

who have been great by original force and power, not (as Virgil) by means of fine management and exquisite artifice of composition applied to their conceptions. The mouth, and the region of the mouth, the whole circumjacencies of the mouth, were about the strongest feature in Wordsworth's face; there was nothing specially to be noticed that I know of, in the mere outline of the lips; but the swell and protrusion of the parts above and around the mouth, are both noticeable in themselves, and also because they remind me of a very interesting fact which I discovered about three years after this my first visit to Wordsworth.

Being a great collector of everything relating to Milton, I had naturally possessed myself, whilst yet very young, of Richardson the painter's thick octavo volume of notes on the 'Paradise Lost.' It happened, however, that my copy, in consequence of that mania for portrait collecting which has stripped so many English classics of their engraved portraits, had no picture of Milton. Subsequently I ascertained that it ought to have had a very good likeness of the great poet; and I never rested until I procured a copy of the book, which had not suffered in this respect by the fatal admiration of the amateur. The particular copy offered to me was one which had been priced unusually high, on account of the unusually fine specimen which it contained of the engraved portrait. This, for a particular reason, I was exceedingly anxious to see; and the reason was — that, according to an anecdote reported by Richardson himself, this portrait, of all that was shown to her, was the only one acknowledged, by Milton's last surviving daughter, to be a strong likeness of her father. And her involuntary gestures concurred with her deliberate words: — for, on seeing all the rest, she was silent and inanimate; but the very instant she

beheld this from a crayon drawing which embellishes the work of Richardson, she burst out into a rapture of passionate recognition; exclaiming — 'This is my father! this is my dear father!' Naturally, therefore, after such a testimony, so much stronger than any other person in the world could offer to the authentic value of this portrait, I was eager to see it.

Judge of my astonishment, when, in this portrait of Milton, I saw a likeness nearly perfect of Wordsworth, better by much than any which I have since seen, of those expressly painted for himself. The likeness is tolerably preserved in that by Carruthers, in which one of the little Rydal waterfalls, &c., composes a background; yet this is much inferior, as a mere portrait of Wordsworth, to the Richardson head of Milton; and this, I believe, is the last which represents Wordsworth in the vigor of his power. The rest, which I have not seen, may be better as works of art, (for anything I know to the contrary,) but they must labor under the great disadvantage of presenting the features when 'defeatured' in the degree and the way I have described, by the idiosyncrasies of old age, as it affects this family; for it is noticed of the Wordsworths, by those who are familiar with their peculiarities, that, in their very blood and constitutional differences, lie hidden causes, able, in some mysterious way —

> 'Those shocks of passion to prepare
> That kill the bloom before its time,
> And blanch, without the owner's crime,
> The most resplendent hair.'

Some people, it is notorious, live faster than others; the oil is burned out sooner in one constitution than another — and the cause of this may be various; but, in the Wordsworths, one part of the cause is, no doubt, the

secret fire of a temperament too fervid; the self-consuming energies of the brain, that gnaw at the heart and life-strings for ever. In that account which 'The Excursion,' presents to us of an imaginary Scotsman, who, to still the tumult of his heart, when visiting the 'forces' (*i. e.* cataracts) of a mountainous region, obliges himself to study the laws of light and color, as they affect the rainbow of the stormy waters; vainly attempting to mitigate the fever which consumed him by entangling his mind in profound speculations; raising a cross-fire of artillery from the subtilizing intellect, under the vain conceit that, in this way, he could silence the mighty battery of his impassioned brain — there we read a picture of Wordsworth and his own youth. In Miss Wordsworth, every thoughtful observer might read the same self-consuming style of thought. And the effect upon each was so powerful for the promotion of a premature old age, and of a premature expression of old age, that strangers invariably supposed them fifteen to twenty years older than they were. And I remember Wordsworth once laughingly reporting to me, on returning from a short journey in 1809, a little personal anecdote, which sufficiently showed what was the spontaneous impression upon that subject of casual strangers, whose feelings were not confused by previous knowledge of the truth. He was travelling by a stage-coach, and seated outside, amongst a good half dozen of fellow-passengers. One of these, an elderly man, who confessed to having passed the grand climacterical year (9 multiplied into 7) of 63, though he did not say precisely by how many years, said to Wordsworth, upon some anticipations which they had been mutually discussing of changes likely to result from enclosures, &c., then going on or projecting — 'Ay, ay, another dozen of years will show us strange sights; but

you and I can hardly expect to see them.' 'How so?' said W. 'Why, my friend, how old do you take me to be?' 'Oh, I beg pardon,' said the other; 'I meant no offence — but what?' looking at W. more attentively — 'you'll never see threescore, I'm of opinion.' And, to show that he was not singular in so thinking, he appealed to all the other passengers; and the motion passed *nem. con.* that Wordsworth was rather over than under sixty. Upon this he told them the literal truth — that he had not yet accomplished his thirty-ninth year. 'God bless me!' said the climacterical man; so then, after all, you'll have a chance to see your childer get up like, and get settled! God bless me, to think of that!' And so closed the conversation, leaving to W. a pointed expression, of his own premature age, as revealing itself by looks, in this unaffected astonishment, amongst a whole party of plain men, that he should really belong to a generation of the forward-looking, who live by hope; and might reasonably expect to see a child of seven years old matured into a man.

Returning to the question of portraits, I would observe, that this Richardson engraving of Milton has the advantage of presenting, not only by far the best likeness of Wordsworth, but of Wordsworth in the prime of his powers — a point so essential in the case of one so liable to premature decay. It may be supposed that I took an early opportunity of carrying the book down to Grasmere, and calling for the opinions of Wordsworth's family upon this most remarkable coincidence. Not one member of that family but was as much impressed as myself with the accuracy of the likeness. All the peculiarities even were retained — a drooping appearance of the eyelids, that remarkable swell which I have noticed about the mouth, the way in which the hair lay upon the forehead. In two points only there

was a deviation from the rigorous truth of Wordsworth's features — the face was a little too short and too broad and the eyes were too large. There was also a wreath of laurel about the head, which (as Wordsworth remarked) disturbed the natural expression of the whole picture; else, and with these few allowances, he also admitted that the resemblance was, *for that period of his life*, (but let not that restriction be forgotten,) perfect, or as nearly so as art could accomplish.

I have gone into so large and circumstantial a review of my recollections in a matter that would have been trifling and tedious in excess, had their recollection related to a less important man; but, with a certain knowledge that the least of them will possess a lasting and a growing interest in connection with William Wordsworth — a man who is not simply destined to be had in everlasting remembrance by every generation of men, but (which is a modification of the kind worth any multiplication of the degree) to be had in that *sort* of remembrance which has for its shrine the heart of man — that world of fear and grief, of love and trembling hope, which constitutes the essential man; in *that* sort of remembrance, and not in such a remembrance as we grant to the ideas of a great philosopher, a great mathematician, or a great reformer. How different, how peculiar, is the interest which attends the great poets who have made themselves necessary to the human heart; who have first brought into consciousness, and next have clothed in words, those grand catholic feelings that belong to the grand catholic situations of life, through all its stages; who have clothed them in such words that human wit despairs of bettering them! How remote is that burning interest which settles upon men's living memories in our daily thoughts, from that which follows, in a disjointed and limping way, the mere nominal memo-

ries of those who have given a direction and movement to the currents of human thought, and who, by some leading impulse, have even quickened into life speculations appointed to terminate in positive revolutions of human power over physical agents! Mighty were the powers, solemn and serene is the memory, of Archimedes: and Appolonius shines like 'the starry Galileo,' in the firmament of human genius; yet how frosty is the feeling associated with these names by comparison with that which, upon every sunny brae, by the side of every ancient forest, even in the farthest depths of Canada,[4] many a young innocent girl, perhaps at this very moment — looking now with fear to the dark recesses of the infinite forest, and now with love to the pages of the infinite poet, until the fear is absorbed and forgotten in the love — cherishes in her heart for the name and person of Shakspeare! The one is abstraction, and a shadow recurring only by distinct efforts of recollection, and even thus to none but the enlightened and the learned; the other is a household image, rising amongst household remembrances, never separated from the spirit of delight, and hallowed by a human love! Such a place in the affections of the young and the ingenuous, no less than of the old and philosophic, who happen to have any depth of feeling, will Wordsworth occupy in every clime and in every land; for the language in which he writes, thanks be to Providence, which has beneficently opened the widest channels for the purest and most elevating literature, is now ineradicably planted in all quarters of the earth; the echoes under every latitude of every longitude now reverberate English words; and all things seem tending to this result — that the English and the Spanish languages will finally share the earth between them. Wordsworth is peculiarly the poet for the solitary and the meditative; and, throughout the countless myriads of future

America and future Australia, no less than Polynesia and Southern Africa, there will be situations without end, fitted by their loneliness to favor his influence for centuries to come, by the end of which period it may be anticipated that education (of a more enlightened quality and more systematic than yet prevails) may have wrought such changes on the human species, as will uphold the growth of all philosophy, and, therefore, of all poetry which has its foundations laid in the heart of man.

Commensurate with the interest in the poetry will be a secondary interest in the poet — in his personal appearance, and his habits of life, *so far as they can be supposed at all dependent upon his intellectual characteristics ;* for, with respect to differences that are purely casual, and which illustrate no principle of higher origin than accidents of education or chance position, it is a gossiping taste only, that could seek for such information, and a gossiping taste that would choose to consult it. Meantime, it is under no such gossiping taste that volumes have been written upon the mere portraits and upon the possible portraits of Shakspeare; and how invaluable should we all feel any record to be, which should raise the curtain upon Shakspeare's daily life — his habits, personal and social, his intellectual tastes, and his opinions on contemporary men, books, events, or national prospects! I cannot, therefore, think it necessary to apologize for the most circumstantial notices, past or to come, of Wordsworth's person and habits of life. But one thing it is highly necessary that I should explain, and the more so because a grand confession which I shall make at this point as in some measure necessary to protect myself from the appearance of a needless mystery and reserve, would, if unaccompanied by such an explanation, expose me to the suspicion of having, at times, yielded to a

private prejudice, so far as to color my account of Wordsworth with a spirit of pique or illiberality. I shall acknowledge, then, on my own part — and I feel that I might even make the same acknowledgment on the part of Professor Wilson — (though I have no authority for doing so) — that to neither of us, though, at all periods of our lives, treating him with the deep respect which is his due, and, in our earlier years, with a more than filial devotion — nay, with a blind loyalty of homage, which had in it, at that time, something of the spirit of martyrdom, which, for his sake, courted even reproach and contumely; yet to neither of us has Wordsworth made those returns of friendship and kindness which most firmly I maintain that we were entitled to have challenged. More by far in sorrow than in anger — sorrow that points to recollections too deep and too personal for a transient notice — I acknowledge myself to have been long alienated from Wordsworth; sometimes even I feel a rising emotion of hostility — nay, something, I fear, too nearly akin to vindictive hatred. Strange revolution of the human heart! strange example of the changes in human feeling that may be wrought by time and chance! to find myself carried by the great tide of affairs, and by error, more or less, on one side or the other, either on Wordsworth's in doing too little, or on mine in expecting too much — carried so far away from that early position which, for so long a course of years, I held in respect to him — that now, for that fountain of love towards Mr Wordsworth and all his household—fountain profound — fountain inexhaustible —

> 'Whose only business was to flow —
> And flow it did, not taking heed
> Of its own bounty or their need' —

now, I find myself standing aloof, gloomily granting (be-

cause I cannot refuse) my intellectual homage, but no longer rendering my tribute as a willing service of the heart, or rejoicing in the prosperity of my idol! Could I have believed, twenty-five years ago, had a voice from Heaven revealed it, that, even then, with a view to what time should bring about, I might adopt the spirit of the old verses, and, apostrophizing Wordsworth, might say — Great Poet! when that day, so fervently desired, shall come, that men shall undo their wrongs, and when every tongue shall chant thy praises, and every heart

> 'Devote a wreath to thee —
> That day (for come it will) that day
> Shall I lament to see.'

But no; not so. Lament I never did; nor suffered even 'the hectic of a moment' to sully or to trouble that purity of perfect pleasure with which I welcomed this great revolution in the public feeling. Let me render justice to Professor Wilson, as well as to myself: not for a moment, not by a solitary movement of reluctance or demur, did either of us hang back in giving that public acclamation which we, by so many years, had anticipated; yes, we singly — we with no sympathy to support us from any quarter. The public press remains, with its inexorable records, to vouch for us, that we paid an oriental homage — homage as to one who could have pleaded antique privilege, and the consecration of centuries, at a time when the finger of scorn was pointed at Mr. Wordsworth from every journal in the land; and that we persisted in this homage at a period long enough removed to have revolutionized the public mind, and also long enough to have undermined the personal relations between us of confidential friendship. Did it ask no courage to come forward, in the first character, as solitary

friends, holding up our protesting hands amidst a wilderness of chattering buffoons? Did it ask no magnanimity to stand firmly to the post we had assumed, not passively acquiescing in the new state of public opinion, but exulting in it and aiding it, long after we had found reason to think ourselves injuriously treated? Times are changed; it needs no courage, in the year of our Lord 1839, to discover and proclaim a great poet in William Wordsworth; it needed none in the year 1815, to discover a frail power in the French empire, or an idol of clay and brass in the French Emperor. But, to make the first discovery in the years 1801, 1802, the other in 1808, those things were worthy of honor; and the first was worthy of gratitude from all the parties interested in the event. Let me not, however, be misunderstood — Mr. Wordsworth is a man of unimpeached, unimpeachable integrity: he neither has done, nor could have done, consciously, any act in violation of his conscience. On the contrary, I am satisfied, Professor Wilson is satisfied, that injuries of a kind to involve an admitted violation of principle, cannot have occurred in Mr. Wordsworth's intercourse with any man. But there are cases of wrong for which the conscience is not the competent tribunal. Sensibility to the just claims of another, power to appreciate these claims, power also to perceive the true mode of conveying and expressing the appreciation — in a case, suppose, where the claims to consideration are at once real, and even tangible, as to their ground, yet subtle and aerial as to the shape they have assumed — claims, for instance, founded on a personal devotion to the interests of the other party, when the rest of the world slighted them — this mode of appreciating skill may be utterly wanting, or may be crossed and thwarted by many a conflicting bias, where the conscience is quite incapable of going

astray. I imagine a case such as this which follows: — The case of a man who, for many years, has connected himself closely with the domestic griefs and joys of another, over and above his primary service of giving to him the strength and the encouragement of a profound literary sympathy, at a time of universal scowling from the world; suppose this man to fall into a situation in which, from want of natural connections and from his state of insulation in life, it might be most important to his feelings that some support should be lent to him by a family having a known place and acceptation, and what may be called a root in the country, by means of connections, descent, and long settlement. To look for this, might be a most humble demand on the part of one who had testified his devotion in the way supposed. To miss it might —— but enough. I murmur not; complaint is weak at all times; and the hour is passed irrevocably, and by many a year, in which an act of friendship so natural, and costing so little, (in both senses so priceless,) could have been availing. The ear is deaf that should have been solaced by the sound of welcome. Call, but you will not be heard; shout aloud, but your 'ave!' and 'all hail!' will now tell only as an echo of departed days, proclaiming the hollowness of human hopes. I, for my part, have long learned the lesson of suffering in silence; and also I have learned to know that, wheresoever female prejudices are concerned, *there* it will be a trial more than Herculean, of a man's wisdom, if he can walk with an even step, and swerve neither to the right nor the left.

I shall now proceed to sketch the daily life and habits of those who are familiarly known to the public as the *Lake Poets;* but, first of all, as a proper introduction to this sketch, I shall trace, in a brief outline, the chief

incidents in the life of William Wordsworth, which are interesting, not only in virtue of their illustrious subject, but also as exhibiting a most remarkable (almost a providential) arrangement of circumstances, all tending to one result — that of insulating from worldly cares, and carrying onward from childhood to the grave, in a state of serene happiness, one who was unfitted for daily toil, and, at all events, who could not, under such demands upon his time and anxieties, have prosecuted those genial labors in which all mankind have an interest.

CHAPTER XI.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH was born at Cockermouth, a small town of Cumberland, seated on the river Cocker. His father was a lawyer, and acted as an agent for that Lord Lonsdale, who is not unfrequently described by those who still remember him, as 'the bad Lord Lonsdale.' In what was he bad? Chiefly, I believe, in this — that, being a man of great local power, founded on his rank, on his official station of Lord Lieutenant over two counties, and on a very large estate, he used his power in a most oppressive way. I have heard it said that he was mad; and, at any rate, he was inordinately capricious — capricious even to eccentricity. But perhaps his madness was nothing more than the intemperance of a haughty and a headstrong will, encouraged by the consciousness of power, and tempted to abuses of it by the abject servility which poverty and dependence presented in one direction, embittering the contrast of that defiance which inevitably faced him in another throughout a land of freedom, and amongst spirits as haughty as his own. He was a true feudal chieftain; and, in the very approaches to his mansion, in the style of his equipage, or whatever else was likely to meet the public eye, he delighted to express his disdain of modern refinements, and the haughty carelessness of his magnificence. The coach in which he used to visit Penrith, the

nearest town to his principal house of Lowther, was old and neglected: his horses fine, but untrimmed; and such was the impression diffused about him by his gloomy temper and his habits of oppression, that the streets were silent as he traversed them, and an awe sate upon many faces, (so at least, I have heard a Penrith contemporary of the old despot declare,) pretty much like that which may be supposed to attend the entry into a guilty town, of some royal commission for trying state criminals. In his park, you saw some of the most magnificent timber in the kingdom — trees that were coeval with the feuds of York and Lancaster, yews that perhaps had furnished bows to Cœur de Lion, and oaks that might have built a navy. All was savage grandeur about these native forests: their sweeping lawns and glades had been unapproached, for centuries it might be, by the hand of art; and amongst them roamed — not the timid fallow deer — but thundering droves of wild horses.

Lord Lonsdale, according to an old English writer, (in describing, I think, the Earl of Arundel,) 'went sometimes to London, because there only he found a greater man than himself; but not often, because at home he was allowed to forget that there was such a man.' Even in London, however, his haughty injustice found occasions for making itself known. On a court day, (I revive an anecdote once familiarly known,) St. James's Street was lined by cavalry, and the orders were peremptory, that no carriages should be allowed to pass, except those which were carrying parties to court. Whether it were by accident or no, Lord Lonsdale's carriage advanced, and the coachman, in obedience to orders shouted out from the window, was turning down the forbidden route, when a trooper rode up to the horses' heads, and stopped them: the thundering menaces of Lord Lonsdale perplexed the

soldier, who did not know but he might be bringing himself into a scrape by persisting in his opposition; but the officer on duty, observing the scene, rode up, and, in a determined tone, enforced the order, causing two of his men to turn the horses' heads round into Piccadilly. Lord Lonsdale threw his card to the officer — and a duel followed; in which, however, the outrageous injustice of his Lordship met with a pointed rebuke; for the first person whom he summoned to his aid, in the quality of second, though a friend, and (I believe) a relative of his own, declined to sanction, by any interference, so scandalous a quarrel with an officer for simply executing an official duty. In this dilemma — for probably he was aware that few military men would fail to take the same disapproving view of the affair — he applied to the present * Earl of Lonsdale, then Sir William Lowther. Either there must have been some needless discourtesy in the officer's mode of fulfilling his duty, or else Sir William thought the necessity of the case, however wantonly provoked, a sufficient justification for a relative giving his assistance, even under circumstances of such egregious injustice. At any rate, it is due to Sir William, in mere candor, to suppose that he did nothing in this instance but what his conscience approved; seeing, that in all others his conduct has been such as to win him the universal respect of the two counties in which he is best known. He it was that acted as second; and, by a will which is said to have been dated the same day, he became eventually possessed of a large property, which did not necessarily accompany the title.

Another anecdote is told of the same Lord Lonsdale, which expresses, in a more eccentric way, and a way

* Who must now (1854) be classed as the late Earl.

that to many people will be affecting — to some shocking — the moody energy of his passions. He loved, with passionate fervor, a fine young woman, of humble parentage, in a Cumberland farm-house. Her he had persuaded to leave her father and put herself under his protection. Whilst yet young and beautiful, she died: Lord Lonsdale's sorrow was profound; he could not bear the thought of a final parting from that face which had become so familiar to his heart; he caused her to be embalmed; a glass was placed over her features; and, at intervals, when his thoughts reverted to her memory, he found a consolation (or perhaps a luxurious irritation) of his sorrow, in visiting this sad memorial of his former happiness. This story, which I have often heard repeated by the country people of Cumberland, strengthened the general feeling of this eccentric nobleman's self-willed character, though in this instance complicated with a trait of character, that argued nobler capacities. By what rules he guided himself in dealing with the various lawyers, agents, or stewards, whom his extensive estates brought into a dependency upon his justice or his moderation — whether in fact he had no rule, but left all to accident or caprice — I have never learned. Generally, I have heard it said, that in some years of his life he resisted the payment of all bills indiscriminately, which he had any colorable plea for supposing to contain overcharges; some fared ill because they were neighbors; and his Lordship could say, that 'he knew them to be knaves;' others fared worse, because they were so remote that 'how could his Lordship know what they were?' Of this number, and possibly for this reason left unpaid, was Wordsworth's father. He died whilst his four sons and one daughter were yet helpless children, leaving to them respectable fortunes; but which, as yet, were unrealized and tolerably

hypothetic, as they happened to depend upon so shadowy a basis as the justice of Lord Lonsdale. The executors of the will, and trustees of the children's interests, in one point acted wisely: foreseeing the result of a legal contest with so potent a defendant as this leviathan of two counties, and that, under any nominal award, the whole estate of the orphans must be swallowed up in the costs of a suit that would be carried into Chancery, and finally before the Lords, they prudently withdrew from all active measures of opposition, confiding the event to Lord Lonsdale's returning sense of justice. Unfortunately for that nobleman's reputation, and also, as was thought, for the children's prosperity, before this somewhat rusty quality of justice could have time to operate, his Lordship died.

However, for once the world was wrong in its anticipations for the children: the successor to Lord Lonsdale's titles and Cumberland estates was made aware of the entire case, in all its circumstances; and he very honorably gave directions for full restitution being made. This was done; and in one respect the result was more fortunate for the children than if they had been trained from youth to rely upon their expectations: for by the time this repayment was made, three out of the five children were already settled in life, with the very amplest prospects opening before them — *so* ample as to make their private patrimonial fortunes of inconsiderable importance in their eyes: and very probably the withholding of their inheritance it was, however unjust, and however little contemplated as an occasion of any such effect, that urged these three persons to the exertions requisite for their present success. Two only of the children remained to whom the restoration of their patrimony was a matter of grave mportance; but it was precisely those two whom no circumstances could have made independent of their

hereditary means by personal exertions — viz. William Wordsworth, the poet, and Dorothy, the sole daughter of the house. The three others were — Richard, the eldest; he had become a thriving solicitor at one of the inns of court in London; and, if he died only moderately rich, and much below the expectations of his acquaintance, in the final result of his laborious life, it was because he was moderate in his desires; and, in his later years, reverting to the pastoral region of his infancy and boyhood, chose rather to sit down by a hearth of his own amongst the Cumberland mountains, and wisely to woo the deities of domestic pleasures and health, than to follow the chase after wealth in the feverish crowds of the capital. The third son, I believe was Christopher, (Dr. Wordsworth,) who, at an early age, became a man of importance in the English church, being made one of the chaplains and librarians of the Archbishop of Canterbury, (Dr. Manners Sutton, father of the late Speaker.) He has since risen to the important and dignified station — once held by Barrow, and afterwards by Bentley — of Master of Trinity in Cambridge. Trinity in Oxford is not a first-rate college: but Trinity, Cambridge, answers in rank and authority to Christ Church in Oxford; and to be the head of that college is rightly considered on a level with a bishopric.

Dr. Wordsworth has distinguished himself as an author by several very useful republications, (especially the 'Ecclesiastical Biography,') which he has enriched with valuable notes. And in his own person, besides other works more exclusively learned, he is the author of one very interesting work of historical research upon the long agitated question of 'Who wrote the *Eicon Basilike?*' a question still unsettled, but much nearer to a settlement in consequence of the strong presumptions which Dr. Words-

worth has adduced on behalf of the King's claim.* The fourth and youngest son, John, was in the service of the East India Company, and perished most unhappily on the voyage which he had meant to be his last, off the coast of Dorsetshire, in the Company's ship Abergavenny. A calumny was current at the time, that Captain Wordsworth was in a state of intoxication at the time of the calamity. But the printed report of the affair, revised by survivors, entirely disproves the calumny; which, besides, was in itself incredible to all who were acquainted with Captain

* '*Eicon Basilike:*' — By the way, in the lamented Eliot Warburton's 'Prince Rupert,' this book, by a very excusable mistake, is always cited as the 'Eicon Basili*con:*' he was thinking of the 'Doron Basilicon' written by Charles's father: each of the nouns, *Eicon* and *Doron*, having the same terminal syllable — *on* — it was most excusable to forget that the first belonged to an imparisyllabic declension, so as to be feminine, the second not so; which made it neuter. With respect to the great standing question as to the authorship of the work, I have myself always held, that the natural freedom of judgment in this case has been intercepted by one strong prepossession (entirely false) from the very beginning. The minds of all people have been pre-occupied with the notion, that Dr. Gauden, the reputed author, obtained his bishopric confessedly on the credit of that service. Lord Clarendon, it is said, who hated the doctor, nevertheless gave him a bishopric, on the sole ground of his having written the 'Eicon.' The inference therefore is — that the Prime Minister, who gave so reluctantly, must have given under an irresistible weight of proof that the doctor really had done the work for which so unwillingly he paid him. Any shade of doubt, such as could have justified Lord Clarendon in suspending this gift, would have been eagerly snatched at. Such a shade, therefore, there was not. Meantime the whole of this reasoning rests upon a false assumption: Dr. Gauden did *not* owe his bishopric to a belief (true or false) that he had written the 'Eicon.' The bishopric was given on another account: consequently it cannot, in any way of using the fact, at all affect the presumptions, small or great, which may exist separately for or against the doctor's claim on that head.

Wordsworth's most temperate and even philosophic habits of life. So peculiarly indeed was Captain Wordsworth's temperament and demeanor, and the whole system of his life, colored by a grave and meditative turn of thought, that, amongst his brother officers in the Honorable Company's service, he bore the sirname of 'The Philosopher.' And William Wordsworth, the poet, not only spoke of him always with a sort of respect, that argued him to have been no ordinary man, but he has frequently assured me of one fact which, as implying some want of frankness and sincerity, gave me pain to hear — viz. that in the fine lines entitled, 'The Happy Warrior,' in which an analytical account is given of the main elements which enter into the composition of a real hero, he had in view chiefly his brother John's character. That was true, I dare say; but it was inconsistent, in some measure, with the note attached to the lines, by which the reader learns, that it was out of reverence for Lord Nelson, as one who transcended the estimate here made, that the poem had not been openly connected with his name, as the real suggester of the thoughts. Now, privately, though still professing a lively admiration for the mighty Admiral, as one of the few men who carried into his professional labors a real and vivid genius, (and thus far Wordsworth often testified a deep admiration for Lord N.) yet, in reference to these particular lines, he uniformly declared that Lord N. was much below the ideal there contemplated, and that, in fact, it had been suggested by the recollection of his brother. But, surely, in some of the first passages, this cannot be so; for example, when he makes it one trait of the heaven-born hero, that he, if called upon to face some mighty day of battle —

> 'To which heaven has join'd
> Great issues, good or bad, for human kind —

Is happy as a lover, and attired
With a supernal brightness, like a man inspir'd' —

surely he must have had Lord Nelson's idea predominating in his thoughts; for Captain Wordsworth was scarcely tried in such a situation. There can be no doubt, however, that he merited the praises of his brother; and it was indeed an improbable tale, that he should first of all deviate from this philosophic temperance upon an occasion when all his energies, and the fullest self-possession, were all likely to prove little enough. In reality it was the pilot, the incompetent pilot, who caused the fatal catastrophe: — 'O pilot, you have ruined me!' were amongst the last words that Captain Wordsworth was heard to utter — pathetic words, and fit for him, 'a meek man and a brave,' to use in addressing a last reproach, and summing up the infinite injury, to one who, not through misfortune or overruling will of Providence, but through miserable conceit and unprincipled levity, had brought total ruin upon so many a gallant countryman. Captain Wordsworth might have saved his own life; but the perfect loyalty of his nature to the claims upon him, that sublime fidelity to duty which is so often found amongst men of his profession, kept him to the last upon the wreck; and, after *that*, it is probable that the almost total wreck of his own fortunes, (which, but for this overthrow, would have amounted to twenty thousand pounds, upon the successful termination of this one voyage,) but still more, the total ruin of the new and splendid Indiaman confided to his care, had so much dejected his spirits, that he was not in a condition for making the efforts that, under a more hopeful prospect, he might have been able to make. Six weeks his body lay unrecovered; at the end of that time it was found, and carried to the Isle of Wight, and buried in close neighborhood to the quiet fields which he had so

recently described, in letters to his family at Grasmere, as a Paradise of English peace, to which his mind would be likely oftentimes to revert, amidst the agitations of the sea.

Such were the modes of life pursued by three of the orphan children — such the termination of life to two. Meantime, the daughter of the house was reared liberally, in the family of a relation at Windsor; and she might have pursued a quiet and decorous career, of a character, perhaps, somewhat tame, under the same dignified auspices; but at an early period of life her good angel threw open to her a life of nobler prospects, in the opportunity which then arose, and which she did not hesitate to seize, of becoming the companion, through a life of delightful wanderings — of what, to her more elevated friends, seemed nothing short of vagrancy — the companion and the confidential friend, and, with a view to the enlargement of her own intellect, the pupil of a brother, the most original and most meditative man of his own age. William had passed his infancy on the very margin of the Lake district, just six miles, in fact, beyond the rocky screen of Whinlatter, and within one hour's ride of Bassinthwaite Water. To those who live in the tame scenery of Cockermouth, the blue mountains in the distance, the sublime peaks of Borrowdale and of Buttermere, raise aloft a signal, as it were, of a new country, a country of romance and mystery, to which the thoughts are habitually turning. Children are fascinated and haunted with vague temptations, when standing on the frontiers of such a foreign land; and so was Wordsworth fascinated, so haunted. Fortunate for Wordsworth that, at an early age, he was transferred to the very centre of this lovely district. At the little town of Hawkshead, seated on the north-west angle of Esthwaite Water, a

grammar school (which, in English usage, means a school for classical literature) was founded, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, by Archbishop Sandys, a member of a very ancient family of that name, still seated in the neighborhood. Hither were sent all the four brothers; and here it was that Wordsworth passed his life until the time arrived for his removal to college. Taking into consideration the peculiar tastes of the person, and the peculiar advantages of the place, I conceive that no pupil of a public school can ever have passed a more luxurious boyhood than Wordsworth. The school discipline was not, I believe, very strict; the mode of living out of school very much resembled that of Eton for Oppidans; less elegant perhaps, and less costly in its provisions for accommodation, but not less comfortable; and in that part of the arrangements which was chiefly Etonian, even more so; for in both places the boys, instead of being gathered into one fold, and at night into one or two huge dormitories, were distributed amongst motherly old 'dames,' technically so called at Eton, but not at Hawkshead. In the latter place, agreeably to the inferior scale of the whole establishment, the houses were smaller, and more cottage-like, consequently more like private households; and the old lady of the *ménage* was more constantly amongst them, providing, with maternal tenderness and with a professional pride, for the comfort of her young flock, and protecting the weak from oppression. The humble cares to which these poor matrons dedicated themselves, may be collected from several allusions scattered through the poems of Wordsworth; that entitled 'Nutting,' for instance, in which his own early Spinosistic feeling is introduced, of a mysterious presence diffused through the solitudes of woods, a presence that was disturbed by the intrusion of careless and noisy outrage, and which is brought into a strong relief by

the previous homely picture of the old housewife equipping her young charge with beggars' weeds in order to prepare him for a struggle with thorns and brambles. Indeed, not only the moderate rank of the boys, and the peculiar kind of relation assumed by these matrons, equally suggested this humble class of motherly attentions, but the whole spirit of the place and neighborhood was favorable to an old English homeliness of domestic and personal economy. Hawkshead, most fortunately for its own manners and the primitive style of its habits even to this day, stands about six miles out of the fashionable line for the 'Lakers.'

Esthwaite, though a lovely scene in its summer garniture of woods, has no features of permanent grandeur to rely upon. A wet or gloomy day, even in summer, reduces it to little more than a wildish pond, surrounded by miniature hills: and the sole circumstances which restore the sense of a romantic region and an alpine character, are the knowledge (but not the sense) of endless sylvan avenues, stretching for twenty miles to the seaside, and the towering groups of Langdale and Grasmere fells, which look over the little pastoral barriers of Esthwaite from distances of eight, ten, and fourteen miles. Esthwaite, therefore, being no object for itself, and the sublime head of Coniston being accessible by a road which evades Hawkshead, few tourists ever trouble the repose of this little village town. And in the days of which I am speaking, (1778–1787,) tourists were as yet few and infrequent to any parts of the country. Mrs. Radcliffe had not begun to cultivate the sense of the picturesque in her popular romances; guide-books with the sole exception of 'Gray's Posthumous Letters,' had not arisen to direct public attention to this domestic Calabria; roads were rude, and, in many instances, no

wide enough to admit post-chaises; but, above all, the whole system of travelling accommodations was barbarous and antediluvian for the requisitions of the pampered south. As yet the land had rest; the annual fever did not shake the very hills; and (which was the happiest immunity of the whole) false taste, the pseudo-romantic rage, had not violated the most awful solitudes amongst the ancient hills by opera-house decorations. Wordsworth, therefore, enjoyed this labyrinth of valleys in a perfection that no one can have experienced since the opening of the present century. The whole was one paradise of virgin beauty; and even the rare works of man, all over the land, were hoar with the gray tints of an antique picturesque; nothing was new, nothing was raw and uncicatrized. Hawkshead, in particular, though tamely seated in itself and its immediate purlieus, has a most fortunate and central locality, as regards the best (at least the most interesting) scenes for a pedestrian rambler. The gorgeous scenery of Borrowdale, the austere sublimities of Wastdalehead, of Langdalehead, or Mardale; these are too oppressive, in their collossal proportions and their utter solitudes, for encouraging a perfectly human interest. Now, taking Hawkshead as a centre, with a radius of about eight miles, one might describe a little circular tract which embosoms a perfect net-work of little valleys — separate wards or cells, as it were, of one large valley, walled in by the great primary mountains of the region. Grasmere, Easdale, Little Langdale, Tilberthwaite, Yewdale, Elter Water, Loughrigg Tarn, Skelwith, and many other little quiet nooks, lie within a single division of this labyrinthine district. All these are within one summer afternoon's ramble. And amongst these, for the years of his boyhood, lay the daily excursions of Wordsworth.

I do not conceive that Wordsworth could have been an amiable boy; he was austere and unsocial, I have reason to think, in his habits; not generous; and, above all, not self-denying. Throughout his later life, with all the benefits of a French discipline in the lesser charities of social intercourse, he has always exhibited a marked impatience of those particular courtesies of life. Not but he was kind and obliging where his services would cost him no exertion; but I am pretty certain that no consideration would ever have induced Wordsworth to burthen himself with a lady's reticule, parasol, shawl, 'or anything that was hers.' Mighty must be the danger which would induce him to lead her horse by the bridle. Nor would he, without some demur, stop to offer her his hand over a stile. Freedom — unlimited, careless, insolent freedom — unoccupied possession of his own arms — absolute control over his own legs and motions — these have always been so essential to his comfort, that in any case where they were likely to become questionable, he would have declined to make one of the party. Meantime, we are not to suppose that Wordsworth, the boy, expressly sought for solitary scenes of nature amongst woods and mountains, with a direct conscious anticipation of imaginative pleasure, and loving them with a pure, disinterested love, on their own separate account. These are feelings beyond boyish nature, or, at all events, beyond boyish nature trained amidst the necessities of social intercourse. Wordsworth, like his companions, haunted the hills and the vales for the sake of angling, snaring birds, swimming, and sometimes of hunting, according to the Westmoreland fashion, on foot; for riding to the chase is quite impossible, from the precipitous nature of the ground. It was in the course of these pursuits, by an indirect effect growing gradually upon him, that Wordsworth became a

passionate lover of nature, at the time when the growth of his intellectual faculties made it possible that he should combine those thoughtful passions with the experience of the eye and the ear.

There is, amongst the poems of Wordsworth, one most ludicrously misconstrued by his critics, which offers a philosophical hint upon this subject of great instruction. I will preface it with the little incident which first led Wordsworth into a commentary upon his own meaning. One night, as often enough happened, during the Peninsular war, he and I had walked up Dunmail Raise, from Grasmere, about midnight, in order to meet the carrier who brought the London newspapers, by a circuitous course from Keswick. The case was this : — Coleridge, for many years, received a copy of the *Courier*, as a mark of esteem, and in acknowledgment of his many contributions to it, from one of the proprietors, Mr. Daniel Stewart. This went up in any case, let Coleridge be where he might, to Mrs. Coleridge ; for a single day, it staid at Keswick, for the use of Southey ; and, on the next, it came on to Wordsworth, by the slow conveyance of a carrier, plying with a long train of cars between Whitehaven and Kendal. Many a time the force of the storms or floods would compel the carrier to stop on his route, five miles short of Grasmere, at Wythburn, or even eight miles short, at Legberthwaite. But, as there was always hope until one or two o'clock in the morning, often and often it would happen that, in the deadly impatience for earlier intelligence, Wordsworth and I would walk off to meet him about midnight, to a distance of three or four miles. Upon one of these occasions, when some great crisis in Spain was daily apprehended, we had waited for an hour or more, sitting upon one of the many huge blocks of stone which lie scattered over that narrow

field of battle on the desolate frontier of Cumberland and Westmoreland, where King Dun Mail, with all his peerage, fell, more than a thousand years ago. The time had arrived, at length, that all hope for that night had left us: no sound came up through the winding valleys that stretched to the north; and the few cottage lights, gleaming, at wide distances, from recesses amidst the rocky hills, had long been extinct. At intervals, Wordsworth had stretched himself at length on the high road, applying his ear to the ground, so as to catch any sound of wheels that might be groaning along at a distance. Once, when he was slowly rising from this effort, his eye caught a bright star that was glittering between the brow of Seat Sandal, and of the mighty Helvellyn. He gazed upon it for a minute or so; and then, upon turning away to descend into Grasmere, he made the following explanation: — 'I have remarked, from my earliest days, that if, under any circumstances, the attention is energetically braced up to an act of steady observation, or of steady expectation, then, if this intense condition of vigilance should suddenly relax, at that moment any beautiful, any impressive visual object, or collection of objects, falling upon the eye, is carried to the heart with a power not known under other circumstances. Just now, my ear was placed upon the stretch, in order to catch any sound of wheels that might come down upon the Lake of Wythburn from the Keswick road: at the very instant when I raised my head from the ground, in final abandonment of hope for this night, at the very instant when the organs of attention were all at once relaxing from their tension, the bright star hanging in the air above those outlines of massy blackness, fell suddenly upon my eye, and penetrated my capacity of apprehension with a pathos and a sense of the Infinite, that would not have

arrested me under other circumstances.' He then went on to illustrate the same psychological principle from another instance; it was an instance derived from that exquisite poem, in which he describes a mountain boy planting himself at twilight on the margin of some solitary bay of Windermere, and provoking the owls to a contest with himself, by 'mimic hooting,' blown through his hands; which of itself becomes an impressive scene to any one able to realize to his fancy the various elements of the solitary woods and waters, the solemn vesper hour, the solitary bird, the solitary boy. Afterwards, the poem goes on to describe the boy as waiting, amidst 'the pauses of his skill,' for the answers of the birds — waiting with intensity of expectation — and then, at length, when, after waiting to no purpose, his attention began to relax — that is, in other words, under the giving way of one exclusive direction of his senses, began suddenly to allow an admission to other objects — then, in that instant, the scene actually before him, the visible scene, would enter unawares —

'With all its solemn imagery' —

This complex scenery was — What?

> 'Was carried *far* into his heart,
> With all its pomp, and that uncertain heav'n received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake.'

This very expression, 'far,' by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me as with a flash of sublime revelation. On this, however, Wordsworth did not say anything in his commentary; nor did he notice the conclusion, which is this. After describing the efforts of the boy, and next the passive state which succeeded, under his disappointment,

(in which condition it was that the solemn spectacle entered the boy's mind with effectual power, and with a semi-conscious sense of its beauty that would not be denied,) the poet goes on to say —

> 'And I suppose that I have stood
> A full half hour beside his quiet grave,
> Mute — for he died when he was ten years old.'

Wherefore, then, did the poet stand in the village churchyard of Hawkshead, wrapt in a trance of reverie, over the grave of this particular boy? 'It was,' says Lord Jeffrey, 'for that single accomplishment' — viz. the accomplishment of mimicking the Windermere owls so well that not men only — Coleridge, for instance, or Professor Wilson, or other connoisseurs of owl-music — might have been hoaxed, but actually the old birds themselves, grave as they seem, were effectually humbugged into entering upon a sentimental correspondence of love or friendship — almost regularly 'duplying,' 'replying,' and 'quadruplying,' (as Scotch law has it,) to the boy's original theme. But here, in this solution of Lord Jeffrey's, there is, at all events, a dismal oversight; for it is evident to the most careless reader that the very object of the poem is not the first or initial stage of the boy's history — the exercise of skill which led him, as an occasion, into a rigid and tense effort of attention — not this, but the second stage, the consequence of that attention. Even the attention was an effect, a derivative state; but the second stage, upon which the poet fixes his object, is an effect of that effect; and it is clear that the original notice of the boy's talent is introduced only as a *conditio sine qua non* — a notice without which a particular result (namely, the tense attention of expectation) could not have been made intelligible; as, again, without

this result being noticed, the reaction of that action could quite as little have been made intelligible. Else, and but for this conditional and derivative necessity, but for this dependency of the essential circumstance upon the boy's power of mimicry, it is evident that the 'accomplishment' — which Lord Jeffrey so strangely supposes to have been the main object of the poet in recording the boy, and the main subject of his reverie by the side of his grave — never would have been noticed. It is difficult, indeed, to conceive a stronger evidence of that incoherency of thought under which Lord Jeffrey must have allowed himself to read Wordsworth, than this very blunder.

But, leaving his Lordship, what *was* the subject of the poet's reverie? some reader may say. A poem ought to explain itself; and we cannot for a moment admit, as a justifying subject for reverie, any private knowledge which the poet might happen to have of the boy's character, or of the expectations he had chanced to raise amongst his friends. I will endeavor to say a word on this question; but, that I may not too much interrupt the narration, in a note. At the same time, let me remind the reader of one great and undeniable truth: it is a fact which cannot be controverted, except by the very thoughtless and the very unobserving, that scarcely one in a thousand of impassioned cases, scarcely one effect in a thousand of all the memorable effects produced by poets, can, upon any theories, yet received amongst us, be even imperfectly explained. And, especially, this is true of original poetry. The cases are past numbering in which the understanding says, or seems to say, one thing, impassioned nature another; and, in poetry, at least, Cicero's great rule will be found to fail — that '*nunquam aliud natura, aliud sapientia dicit;*' if, at least, we understand

sapientia to mean dispassionate good sense. How, for instance, could plain good sense — how could the very finest understanding — have told any man, beforehand, that love in excess, amongst its other modes of waywardness, was capable of prompting such appellations as that of 'wretch' to the beloved object? Yet, as a fact, as an absolute fact of the experience, it is undeniable that it is among the impulses of love, in extremity, to clothe itself in the language of disparagement — *why*, is yet to be explained.

> 'Perhaps 'tis pretty
> To mutter and mock a broken charm;
> To dally with wrong that does no harm;
> Perhaps 'tis pretty to tie together
> Thoughts so all unlike each other;
> To feel, at each wild word, within,
> A sweet recoil of love and pity.
> And what if, in a world of sin,' &c. &c.

That is Coleridge's solution; and the amount of it is — first, that it is delightful to call up what we know to be a mere mimicry of evil, in order to feel its non-reality; to dally with phantoms of pain that do not exist: secondly, that such language acts by way of *contrast*, making the love more prominent by the contradictoriness of its expression: thirdly, that in a world of sin, where evil passions are so often called into action, and have thus matured the language of violence in a service of malignity, naturally enough the feeling of violence and excess stumbles into its old forms of expression, even when the excess happens to lie in the very opposite direction. All this seems specious, and is undoubtedly some part of the solution; and the verses are so fancifully beautiful, that they would recommend even a worse philosophy. But, after all, I doubt if the whole philosophy be given: and in a similar attempt of Charles Lamb's, the case is not so

much solved as further illustrated and amplified. Finally, if solved completely, this case is but one of multitudes which are furnished by the English drama: but (and I would desire no better test of the essential inferiority, attaching to the French drama — no better argument of its having grown out of a radically lower nature) there is not, from first to last, throughout that vaunted field of the French literature, one case of what I may denominate the antinomies of passion — cases of self-conflict, in which the understanding says one thing, the impassioned nature of man says another thing. This is a great theme, however, and I dismiss it to a separate discussion.

So far, however, as I have noticed it, this question has arisen naturally out of the account, as I was endeavoring to sketch it, of Wordsworth's attachment to nature in her grandest forms. It grew out of solitude and the character of his own mind; but the mode of its growth was indirect and unconscious, and in the midst of other more boyish or more worldly pursuits; and that which happened to the boy in mimicking the owls happened also to him. In moments of watching for the passage of woodcocks over the hills in moonlight nights, in order that he might snare them, oftentimes the dull gaze of expectation, after it was becoming hopeless, left him liable to effects of mountain scenery under accidents of nightly silence and solitude, which impressed themselves with a depth for which a full tide of success would have allowed no opening. And, as he lived and grew amongst such scenes from childhood to manhood, many thousands of such opportunities had leisure to improve themselves into permanent effects of character, of feeling, and of taste. Like Michael, he was in the heart of many thousand mists. Many a sight, moreover, such as meets the eye rarely of any, except those who haunt the hills and the

tarns at all hours,* and all seasons of the year, had been seen, and neglected perhaps at the time, but afterwards revisited the eye and produced its appropriate effect in silent hours of meditation. In everything, perhaps except in the redundant graciousness of heart which formed so eminent a feature in the moral constitution of that true philosopher; the character, the sensibility, and the taste of Wordsworth, pursued the same course of development as in the education of the Scotch Pedler,†

* In particular, and by way of giving an illustration, let me here mention one of those accidental revelations that unfold new aspects of nature: it was one that occurred to myself. I had gone up at all times of the morning and the year, to an eminence, or rather a vast field of eminences, above Scor Crag, in the rear of Allan Bank, a Liverpool gentleman's mansion, from which is descried the deep and gloomy valley of Great Langdale. Not, however, for many years, had it happened that I found myself standing in that situation about four o'clock on a summer afternoon. At length, and on a favorable day, this accident occurred; and the scene which I then beheld, was one which I shall not wholly forget to my dying day. The effects arose from the position of the sun and of the spectator, taken in connection with a pendulous mass of vapor, in which, however, were many rents and openings, and through them, far below, at an abyss-like depth, was seen the gloomy valley, its rare cottages, and 'unrejoicing' fir-trees. I had beheld the scene many times before; I was familiar with its least important features, but now it was absolutely transfigured; it was seen under lights and mighty shadows, that made it no less marvellous to the eye than that memorable creation amongst the clouds and azure sky, which is described by the Solitary in 'The Excursion.' And, upon speaking of it to Wordsworth, I found that he had repeatedly witnessed the same impressive transfiguration; so that it is not evanescent, but dependent upon fixed and recoverable combinations of time and weather.

† Amongst the various attempts to justify Wordsworth's choice of so humble and even mean an occupation for his philosopher, how strange that the weightiest argument of all should have been omitted — viz. the privilege attached to his functions of penetrating without offence, and naturally, and at periodic intervals, to every firesi le

who gives so much of the movement to the progress of 'The Excursion.'

One of the most interesting among the winter amusements of the Hawkshead boys was that of skating on the adjacent lake. Esthwaite Water is not one of the deep lakes, as its neighbors of Windermere, Coniston, and Grasmere are: consequently, a very slight duration of frost is sufficient to freeze it into a bearing strength. In this respect, Wordsworth found the same advantages in his boyhood as afterwards at the University: for the county of Cambridge is generally liable to shallow waters; and that University breeds more good skaters than all the rest of England. About the year 1810, by way of expressing an interest in *The Friend*, which Coleridge was just at that time publishing in weekly numbers, Wordsworth allowed Coleridge to print an extract from the poem on his own life, descriptive of the games celebrated upon the ice of Esthwaite by all who were able to skate: the mimic chases of hare and hounds, pursued long after the last orange gleam of light had died away from the western horizon — oftentimes far into the night — a circumstance which does not speak much for the discipline of the schools — or rather, perhaps, *does* speak much for the advantages of a situation so pure, and free from the usual perils of a town, as this primitive village of Hawkshead. Wordsworth, in this descriptive passage — which I wish that I had at this moment the means of citing, in order to amplify my account of his earliest tyrocinium — speaks of himself as frequently wheeling aside from his joyous companions to cut across the image of a star; and thus already, in the midst of sportiveness, and by a movement of sportiveness, half unconsciously to himself expressing the growing necessity of retirement to his habits of thought. At another period of the year, when the golden

summer allowed the students a long season of early play before the studies of the day began, he describes himself as roaming hand-in-hand, with one companion, along the banks of Esthwaite Water, chanting, with one voice, the verses of Goldsmith and of Gray — verses which, at the time of recording the fact, he had come to look upon as either in parts false in the principles of their composition, or, at any rate, as wofully below the tone of high poetic passion; but which at that time of life, when the profounder feelings were as yet only germinating, filled them with an enthusiasm which he describes as brighter than the dreams of fever or of wine.

Meanwhile, how prospered the classical studies which formed the main business of Wordsworth at Hawkshead? Not, in all probability, very well; for, though Wordsworth is at this day a very sufficient master of the Latin language, and reads certain favorite authors, especially Horace, with a critical nicety, and with a feeling for the felicities of his composition that probably few have ever felt, I have reason to think that little of this skill had been obtained at Hawkshead. As to Greek, that is a language which Wordsworth has never had energy enough to cultivate with effect.

From Hawkshead, and I believe after he had entered his eighteenth year, (a time which is tolerably early on the English plan,) probably at the latter end of the year 1787, Wordsworth entered at St. John's College, Cambridge. St. John's ranks as the second college in Cambridge — the second as to numbers and influence, and general consideration; in the estimation of the Johnians as the first, or at least as coequal in all things with Trinity; from which, at any rate, the general reader will collect, that no such absolute supremacy is accorded to any society in Cambridge as in Oxford is accorded necessarily

to Christ Church. The advantages of a large college are considerable, both to an idle man who wishes to lurk unnoticed in the crowd, and to the brilliant man, whose vanity could not be gratified by pre-eminence amongst a few. Wordsworth, though not idle as regarded his own pursuits, was so as regarded the pursuits of the place With respect to them he felt — to use his own words — that his hour was not come; and that his doom for the present was a happy obscurity, which left him, unvexed by the torments of competition, to the genial enjoyment of his life in its most genial hours.

It will excite some astonishment when I mention that, on coming to Cambridge, Wordsworth actually assumed the beau, or, in modern slang, the 'dandy.' He dressed in silk stockings, had his hair powdered; and in all things plumed himself on his gentlemanly habits. To those who remember the slovenly dress of his middle and philosophic life, this will furnish matter for a smile.

Stranger still it is to tell, that, for the first time in his life, Wordsworth got 'bouzy' at Cambridge. It is but fair to add, that the first time was also the last time. But perhaps the strangest part of the story is the occasion of this drunkenness; which was in celebration of his first visit to the very rooms at Christ College once occupied by Milton — intoxication by way of homage to the most temperate of men, and this homage offered by one who has turned out himself to the full as temperate! Still one must grant a privilege — and he would be a churl that could frown on such a claim — a privilege and charter of large enthusiasm to such an occasion. And an older man than Wordsworth, at that era not fully nineteen, and a man even without a poet's blood in his veins, might have leave to forget his sobriety in such circumstances. Besides that, after all, I have heard, from Wordsworth's own lips, that he was not

too far gone to attend chapel decorously during the very acmé of his elevation.

The rooms which Wordsworth occupied at St. John's were singularly circumstanced; mementos of what is highest and what is lowest in human things solicited the eye and ear all day long. If the occupant approached the out-doors prospect in one direction, there was visible through the great windows in the adjacent chapel of Trinity, the statue of Newton 'with his silent face and prism,' memorials of the abstracting intellect, serene and absolute, emancipated from fleshly bonds. On the other hand, immediately below, stood the college kitchen; and, in that region, from noon to dewy eve, resounded the shrill voice of scolding from the female ministers of the head cook, never suffering the mind to forget one of the meanest among human necessities. Wordsworth, however, as one who passed much of his time in social gayety, was less in the way of this annoyance than a profounder student would have been. Probably he studied little beyond French and Italian during his Cambridge life; not however at any time forgetting (as I had so much reason to complain, when speaking of my Oxonian contemporaries) the literature of his own country. It is true that he took the regular degree of A. B., and in the regular course; but this was won in those days by a mere nominal examination, unless where the mathematical attainments of the student prompted his ambition to contest the honorable distinction of Senior Wrangler. This, in common with all other honors of the University, is won in our days with far severer effort than in that age of relaxed discipline; but at no period could it have been won, let the malicious and the scornful say what they will, without an amount of mathematical skill very much beyond what has ever been exacted of its *alumni* by any other European

university Wordsworth was a profound admirer of the sublimer mathematics; at least of the higher geometry. The secret of this admiration for geometry lay in the antagonism between this world of bodiless abstraction and the world of passion. And here I may mention appropriately, and I hope without any breach of confidence, that, in a great philosophic poem of Wordsworth's, which is still in MS., and will remain in MS. until after his death, there is, at the opening of one of the books, a dream, which reaches the very *ne plus ultra* of sublimity in my opinion, expressly framed to illustrate the eternity and the independence of all social modes or fashions of existence, conceded to these two hemispheres, as it were, that compose the total world of human power — mathematics on the one hand, poetry on the other.

> 'The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
> ——— undisturbed by space or time;
> The other that was a god — yea, many gods —
> Had voices more than all the winds, and was
> A joy, a consolation, and a hope.'

I scarcely know whether I am entitled to quote — as my memory (though not refreshed by a sight of the poem for more than twenty years) would well enable me to do — any long extract; but thus much I may allowably say, as it cannot in any way affect Mr. Wordsworth's interests, that the form of the drama is as follows; and, by the way, even this form is not arbitrary; but, with exquisite skill in the art of composition, is made to arise out of the situation in which the poet had previously found himself, and is faintly prefigured in the elements of that situation. He had been reading 'Don Quixote' by the seaside; and, oppressed by the heat of the sun, he had fallen asleep whilst gazing on the barren sands before him. He dreams

that, walking in some sandy wilderness of Africa, some endless Zahara, he sees, at a distance

> 'An Arab of the desert, lance in rest,
> Mounted upon a dromedary.'

The Arab rides forward to meet him; and the dreamer perceives, in the countenance of the rider, the agitation of fear, and that he often looks behind him in a troubled way, whilst in his hand he holds two books — one of which is Euclid's 'Elements;' the other, which is a book and yet not a book, seeming, in fact, a shell as well as a book, sometimes neither, and yet both at once. The Arab directs him to apply his ear; upon which —

> 'In an unknown tongue, which yet I understood,

the dreamer says that he heard

> 'A wild prophetic blast of harmony,
> An ode, as if in passion utter'd, that foretold
> Destruction to the people of this earth
> By deluge near at hand.'

The Arab, with grave countenance, assures him that it is even so; that all was true which had been said; and that he himself was riding upon a divine mission, having it in charge

> 'To bury those two books;
> The one that held acquaintance with the stars,' &c.

that is, in effect, to secure the two great interests of poetry and mathematics from sharing in the watery ruin. As he talks, suddenly the dreamer perceives that the Arab's

> ——— 'countenance grew more disturb'd,'

and that his eye was often reverted; upon which the dreaming poet also looks along the desert in the same direction: and in the far horizon he descries

> ——— 'a glittering light.'

What is it? he asks of the Arab rider. 'It is,' said he, 'the waters of the earth,' that even then were travelling on their awful errand. Upon which, the poet sees this apostle of the desert riding off,

'With the fleet waters of the world in chase of him.'

The sketch I have here given of this sublime dream sufficiently attests the interest which Wordsworth took in the peculiar studies of the place, and the exalted privilege which he ascribed to them of co-eternity with 'the vision and the faculty divine' of the poet — the destiny common to both, of an endless triumph over the ruins of nature and time. Meantime, he himself travelled no farther in these studies than through the six elementary books, usually selected from the fifteen of Euclid. Whatever might be the interests of this speculative understanding, whatever his admiration, practically he devoted himself to the more agitating interests of man, social and political, just then commencing that vast career of revolution which has never since been still or stationary; interests which, in his mind, alternated, however, with another and different interest, in the grander forms of external nature, as found in mountainous regions. In obedience to this latter passion, it was — for a passion it had become — that during one of his long Cambridge vacations, stretching from June to November, he went over to Switzerland and Savoy, for a pedestrian excursion amongst the Alps; taking with him, for his travelling companion, a certain Mr. J——, of whom (excepting that he is once apostrophized in a sonnet, written at Calais in the year 1802) I never happened to hear him speak: whence I presume to infer, that Mr. J—— owed this flattering distinction, not so much to any intellectual graces of his society, as, perhaps, to his powers of administering 'punishment' (in the language of the

fancy) to restive and mutinous landlords — for such were abroad in those days; people who presented huge reckonings with one hand, and, with the other, a huge cudgel, by way of opening the traveller's eyes to the propriety of paying them without demur. I do not positively know this to have been the case; but I have heard Wordsworth speak of the ruffian landlords who played upon his youth in the Grisons; and, however well qualified to fight his own battles, he might find, amongst such savage mountaineers, two combatants better than one.

Wordsworth's route, on this occasion, lay, at first, through Austrian Flanders, then (1788, I think) on the fret for an insurrectionary war against the capricious innovations of the Imperial coxcomb, Joseph II. He passed through the camps then forming, and thence ascended the Rhine to Switzerland; crossed the great St. Bernard; visited the Lake of Como, and other interesting scenes in the North of Italy, where, by the way, the tourists were benighted in a forest — having, in some way or other, been misled by the Italian clocks, and their peculiar fashion of striking round to twenty-four o'clock. On his return, Wordsworth published a quarto pamphlet of verses, describing, with very considerable effect and brilliancy, the grand scenery amongst which he had been moving. This poem, as well as another in the same quarto form, describing the English lake scenery of Westmoreland and Cumberland, addressed, by way of letter, 'to a young lady,' (viz. Miss Wordsworth,) are remarkable, in the first place, as the earliest effort of Wordsworth in verse, at least as his earliest publication; but, in the second place, and still more so, from their style of composition. 'Pure description,' even where it cannot be said, sneeringly, 'to hold the place of sense,' is so little attractive as the direct or exclusive object of a poem, and

in reality it exacts so powerful an effort on the part of the reader to realize visually, or make into an apprehensible unity the scattered elements and circumstances brought together, that, inevitably and reasonably, it can never hope to be a popular form of composition; else it is highly probable that these 'Descriptive Sketches' of Wordsworth, though afterwards condemned as vicious in their principles of composition, by his own maturer taste, would really have gained him a high momentary notoriety with the public, had they been fairly brought under its notice: whilst, on the other hand, his revolutionary principles of composition, and his purer taste, ended in obtaining for him nothing but scorn and ruffian insolence. This seems marvellous; but, in fact, it is not so: it seems, I mean, *primâ facie* marvellous, that the inferior models should be fitted to gain a far higher reputation; but the secret lies here — that these were in a taste which, though frequently spurious and hollow, had been long reconciled to the public feelings, and which, besides, have a specific charm for certain minds, even apart from all fashions of the day; whereas, the other had to struggle against sympathies long trained in an opposite direction, to which the recovery of a healthier tone (even where nature had made it possible) presupposed a difficult process of weaning, and an effort of discipline for reorganizing the whole internal economy of the sensibilities, that is both painful and mortifying: for — and that is worthy of deep attention — the misgivings of any vicious or unhealthy state; the impulses and suspicious gleams of the truth struggling with cherished error; the instincts of light conflicting with darkness — these are the real causes of that hatred and intolerant scorn which is ever awakened by the first dawnings of new and important systems of truth. Therefore it is that Christianity was so much more hated than any

mere novel variety of error. Therefore are the first feeble struggles of nature towards a sounder state of health, always harsh and discordant; for the false system which this change for the better disturbs, had, at least, this soothing advantage — that it was self-consistent. Therefore, also, was the Wordsworthian restoration of elementary power, and of a higher or transcendent truth of nature, (or, as some people vaguely expressed the case, of *simplicity*,) received at first with such malignant disgust. For there was a galvanic awakening in the shock of power, as it jarred against the ancient system of prejudices, which inevitably revealed so much of truth as made the mind jealous that all was not right, and just so far affected as to be dissatisfied with its existing creed, but not at all raised up to the level of the new creed; enlightened enough to descry its own wanderings, but not enough to recover the right road.

The more energetic, the more spasmodically potent are the throes of nature towards her own re-establishment in the cases of suspended animation, by drowning, strangling, &c., the more keen is the anguish of revival. And, universally, a transition state is a state of suffering and disquiet. Meantime, the early poems of Wordsworth, that *might* have suited the public taste so much better than his more serious efforts, if the fashion of the hour, or the sanction of a leading review, or the *prestige* of a name in the author, had happened to give them a season's currency, did in fact drop unnoticed into the market. Nowhere have I seen them quoted, no, not even since the author's victorious establishment in the public admiration The reason may be, however, that not many copies were printed at first; no subsequent edition was ever called for; and yet, from growing interest in the author, every copy of the small impression had been studiously bought up

Indeed, I myself went to the publishers (Johnson's) as early as 1805 or 1806, and bought up all the remaining copies, (which were but six or seven of the Foreign Sketches, and two or three of the English,) as presents, and as *future* curiosities in literature to literary friends, whose interest in Wordsworth might assure one of a due value being put upon the poem. Were it not for this extreme scarcity, I am disposed to think that many lines or passages would long ere this have been made familiar to the public ear. Some are delicately, some forcibly picturesque; and the selection of circumstances is occasionally very original and felicitous. In particular, I remember this one, which presents an accident in rural life that must by thousands of repetitions have become intimately known to every dweller in the country, and yet had never before been consciously taken up for a poet's use. After having described the domestic cock as 'sweetly ferocious' — a prettiness of phraseology which he borrows from an Italian author — he notices those competitions or defiances which are so often carried on nterchangeably from great distances: —

'Echo'd by faintly answering farms remote.'

This is the beautiful line in which he has caught and preserved so ordinary an occurrence — one, in fact, of the commonplaces, which lend animation and a moral interest to rural life.

After his return from this Swiss excursion, Wordsworth took up his parting residence at Cambridge, and prepared for a final adieu to academic pursuits and academic society.

It was about this period that the French Revolution broke out; and the reader who would understand its appalling effects — its convulsing, revolutionary effects upon Wordsworth's heart and soul — should consult the

history of the Solitary, as given by himself in 'The Excursion;' for that picture is undoubtedly a leaf from the personal experience of Wordsworth:

> 'From that dejection I was roused —
> But how?' —— &c.

Mighty was the transformation which it wrought in the whole economy of his thoughts; miraculous almost was the expansion which it gave to his human sympathies; chiefly in this it showed its effects — in throwing the thoughts inwards into grand meditations upon man, his final destiny, his ultimate capacities of elevation; and, secondly, in giving to the whole system of the thoughts and feelings a firmer tone, and a sense of the awful *realities* which surround the mind; by comparison with which the previous literary tastes seemed (even where they were fine and elegant, as in Collins, or Gray, unless where they had the self-sufficing reality of religion, as in Cowper) fanciful and trivial. In all lands this result was accomplished, and at the same time: Germany, above all, found her new literature the mere creation and product of this great moral tempest; and in Germany or England alike, the poetry was so entirely regenerated, thrown into moulds of thought and of feeling so new — so primary — so different from the old worn-out channels in which they had been trained to flow — that the poets everywhere felt themselves to be putting away childish things, and now at length — now first (as regarded the eighteenth century) entering upon the dignity and the sincere thinking of mature manhood.

Wordsworth, it is well known to all who know anything of his history, felt himself so fascinated by the gorgeous festival era of the Revolution — that era, when the sleeping snakes which afterwards stung the national felicity

were yet covered with flowers — that he went over to Paris, and spent about one entire year between that city, Orleans, and Blois. There, in fact, he continued to reside almost too long. He had been sufficiently connected with public men to have drawn upon himself some notice from those who afterwards composed the Committee of Puplic Safety. And, as an Englishman, when the war had once obliterated the too fervent and too indulgent partiality, which, at an earlier period of the revolutionary movement, had settled upon the English name, he became an object of gloomy suspicion with those even who would have grieved that he should fall a victim to undistinguishing popular violence. Already *for* England, and in her behalf, he was thought to be that spy which (as Mr. Coleridge tells us, in his *Biographia Literaria*) afterwards he was accounted by Mr. Pitt's emissaries, in the worst of services *against* her. I doubt, however, (let me say it, by the way, without impeachment of Mr. Coleridge's veracity — for he was easily duped,) this whole story about Mr. Pitt's Somersetshire spies; and it has often struck me with astonishment, that Mr. Coleridge should have suffered his personal pride to take so false a direction as to court the humble distinction of having been suspected as a spy, in those very years when poor empty tympanies of men, such as G——, Thelwall, Holcroft, were actually recognized as enemies of the state, and worthy of a State surveillance, by Ministers so blind and grossly misinformed, as, on this point, were Pitt and Dundas. Had I been Coleridge, instead of saving Mr. Pitt's reputation with posterity by ascribing to him a jealousy which he or his agents had not the discernment to cherish, I would have boldly planted myself upon the fact, the killing fact, that he had utterly despised both myself, Coleridge to wit, and Wordsworth — even with

Dogberry, *I* would have insisted upon that — 'Set down, also, that I am an ass!' I would have exulted in this fact; it should have been my glory — namely, tnat two men, whom, in their intellectual faculties, posterity will acknowledge as equal to any age, were scorned and slighted as too contemptible for fear; whilst others, so gross and vulgar in style of mind as this Holcroft, this Thelwall, this — (what is his name?) — were as brainlessly feared by Mr. Pitt's cabinet as ever Bottom was adored by Titania. What a perversion of pride! that Coleridge should have sought, by lending his ear to fables which Wordsworth's far sterner principle views as lies,* to gain the fanciful honor of standing upon Mr. Pitt's

* The reader, who may happen not to have seen Mr. Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, is informed that Mr. Coleridge tells a long story about a man who followed and dogged himself and Mr. Wordsworth in all their rural excursions, under a commission (originally emanating from Mr. Pitt) for detecting some overt acts of treason, or treasonable correspondence; or, in default of either, some words of treasonable conversation. Unfortunately for his own interests as an active servant, capable of bagging a promising amount of game, within a week or so, even in a whole month, that spy had collected nothing at all as the basis of a report, excepting only something which they (Coleridge and Wordsworth, to wit,) were continually saying to each other, now in blame, now in praise, of one *Spy Nosy;* and this, praise and blame alike, the honest spy very naturally took to himself — seeing that the world accused him of having a *nose* of unreasonable dimensions, and his own conscience accused him of being a spy. 'Now,' says Mr. Coleridge, 'the very fact was, that Wordsworth and I were constantly talking about Spinosa.' This story makes a very good Joe Miller; but, for other purposes, is somewhat damaged. However, there is one excellent story in the case. Some country gentlemen from the neighborhood of Nether Stowey, upon a party happening to discuss the probabilities that Wordsworth and Coleridge might be traitors and in correspondence with the French Directory, answered thus: — 'Oh, as to that Coleridge, he's a rattle-brain that will say more in a week than he wil.

pocket-list of traitors and French spies; when, after all, they stood confessedly in that list as tenth-rate and most inconsiderable villains. Heavens! that was a strange ambition, that, rather than be wholly forgotten by Mr. Pitt, (in which fate there was, by possibility, a great dignity,) would seek to figure amongst the very rear-guard of his traitors!

In France, however, Wordsworth had a chance, in good earnest, for passing for the traitor, that, in England, no rational person ever thought him. He had chosen his friends carelessly; nor could any man, the most sagacious, have chosen them safely, in a time when the internal schisms of the very same general party brought with them worse hostilities and more personal perils than even, upon the broader divisions of party, could have attended the most *ultra* professions of anti-national politics, and when the rapid changes of position shifted the peril from month to month. One individual is specially recorded by Wordsworth, in the poem on his own life, as a man of the highest merit, and personal qualities the most brilliant, who ranked first upon the list of Wordsworth's friends; and this man was so far a safe friend, at one moment, as he was a republican general — finally, indeed, a commander-in-chief. This was Beaupuis; and the description of his character and position is singularly interesting. There is, in fact, a special value and a use about the case: it opens one's eyes feelingly to the fact, that, even in this thoughtless people, so full of vanity and levity — nevertheless, the awful temper of the times, and the dread burthen of human interests with which it was

stand to in a twelvemonth. But Wordsworth — that's the traitor: why, God bless me, he's so close on the subject, that d—n me if you'll ever hear him open his lips on the subject from year's end to year's end!'

charged — had called to a consciousness of new duties — had summoned to an audit, as if at some great final tribunal, even the gay, radiant creatures that, under less solemn auspices, under the reign of a Francis I., or a Louis XIV., would have been the merest painted butterflies of the court-sunshine. This Beaupuis was a man of superb person — beautiful in a degree which made him a model of male beauty, both as to face and figure; and, accordingly, in a land where conquests of that nature were so easy, and the subjects of so trifling an effort, he had been distinguished, to his own as well as the public eyes, by a rapid succession of *bonnes fortunes* amongst women. Such, and so glorified by triumphs the most unquestionable and flattering, had the earthquake of the revolution found him. From that moment, he had no leisure, not a thought, to bestow upon his former selfish and frivolous pursuits. He was hurried, as one inspired by some high apostolic passion, into the service of the unhappy and desolate serfs amongst his own countrymen — such as are described, at an earlier date, by Madame de Sevigné, as the victims of feudal institutions; and one day as he was walking with Wordsworth in the neighborhood of Orleans, and they had turned into a little quiet lane, leading off from a heath, suddenly they came upon the following spectacle: — A girl, seventeen or eighteen years old, hunger-bitten, and wasted to a meagre shadow, was knitting, in a dejected, drooping way; whilst to her arm was attached, by a rope, the horse, equally famished, that earned the miserable support of her family. Beaupuis comprehended the scene in a moment; and seizing Wordsworth by the arm, he said — 'Dear English friend! — brother from a nation of freemen! — *that* it is that is the curse of our people, in their widest division; and to cure this, it is, as well as to maintain our work against

the kings of the earth, that blood must be shed and tears must flow for many years to come!' At that time, the revolution had not fulfilled its purposes; as yet, the King was on the throne; the fatal 10th of August, 1792, had not dawned; and, as yet, there was safety for a subject of kings.* The irresistible stream was hurrying forwards. The King fell; and (to pause for a moment) how divinely is the fact recorded by Wordsworth, in the MS. poem on his own life, placing the awful scenes past and passing in Paris, under a pathetic relief from the description of the golden, autumnal day, sleeping in sunshine —

* How little has any adequate power as yet approached this great theme! Not the Grecian stage — not 'the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes,' in any of its scenes, unfolds such tragical grouping of circumstances and situations as may be gathered from the memoirs of the time. The galleries and vast staircases of Versailles, at early dawn, on some of the greatest days — the tempestuous gathering of the mobs — the figure of the Duke of Orleans obscurely detected amongst them — the growing fury — the growing panic — the blind tumult — and the dimness of the event — all make up a scene worthy to blend with our time-hallowed images of Babylon or of Nineveh with the enemy in all her gates, Memphis or Jerusalem in their agonies. But, amongst all the exponents of the growing agitation that besieged the public mind, none is so profoundly impressive as the scene (every Sunday renewed) at the Chapel Royal. Even in the most penitential of the litanies, in the presence when most immediately confessed of God himself — when the antiphonies were chanted, one party singing, with fury and gnashing of teeth, *Salvum fac regem*, and another, with equal hatred and fervor, answering *Et Reginam* — the organ roared into thunder — the semi-chorus swelled into shouting — the menaces into defiance — the agitation into tempestuous fury — again the crashing semi-choir sang with shouts their *Salvum fac regem* — again the vengeful antiphony hurled back its *Et Reginam* — and one person, an eye-witness of these scenes, which mounted in violence on each successive Sunday, declares that, oftentimes, the semi-choral bodies were at the point of fighting with each other in the presence of the King.

'When I
Towards the fierce metropolis bent my steps
The homeward road to England. From his throne
The King had fallen' —&c.

What a picture does he give of the fury which there possessed the public mind; of the frenzy which shone in every eye, and through every gesture; of the stormy groups assembled at the Palais Royal, or the Tuilleries, with 'hissing factionists' for ever in their centre, 'hissing' from the self-baffling of their own madness, and incapable from wrath of speaking clearly; of fear already creeping over the manners of multitudes; of stealthy movements through back streets; plotting and counter-plotting in every family; feuds to extermination, dividing children of the same house for ever; scenes such as those of the Chapel Royal, (now silenced on that *public* stage,) repeating themselves daily amongst private friends; and, to show the universality of this maniacal possession — that it was no narrow storm discharging its fury by local concentration upon a single city, but that it overspread the whole realm of France — a picture is given, wearing the same features, of what passed daily at Orleans, Blois, and other towns. The citizens are described in the attitudes they assumed at the daily coming in of the post from Paris; the fierce sympathy is portrayed, with which they echoed back the feelings of their compatriots in the capital; men of all parties had been there up to this time; aristocrats as well as democrats — and one in particular of the former class is put forward as a representative of his class. This man, duly as the hour arrived which brought the Parisian newspapers, read restlessly of the tumults and insults amongst which the Royal Family now passed their days; of the decrees by which his own order were threatened or assailed; of the

self-expatriation, now continually swelling in amount, as a measure of despair on the part of myriads, as well priests as gentry — all this and worse he read in public; and still as he read,

> 'his hand
> Haunted his sword like an uneasy spot
> In his own body.'

In short, as there never has been so strong a national convulsion diffused so widely with equal truth, it may be asserted that no describer, so powerful, or idealizing so magnificently what he deals with, has ever been a real living spectator of parallel scenes. The French, indeed, it may be said, are far enough from being a people profound in feeling. True; but of all people, they most exhibit their feeling on the surface; are the most *demonstrative* (to use a modern term); and most of all mark their feelings by outward expression of gesticulation and fervent enunciation: not to insist upon the obvious truth — that even a people of shallow feeling may be deeply moved by tempests which uproot the forest of a thousand years' growth; by changes in the very organization of society, that throw all things, for a time, into one vast anarchy; and by murderous passions, alternately the effect and the cause of that same chaotic anarchy. Now, it was in this autumn of 1792, as I have already said, that Wordsworth parted finally from his illustrious friend — for, all things considered, he may be justly so entitled — the gallant Beaupuis. This great season of public trial had searched men's natures; revealed their real hearts; brought into light and action qualities oftentimes not suspected by their possessors; and had thrown men, as in elementary states of society, each upon his own native resources, unaided by the old conventional forces of rank and birth. Beaupuis had shone to unusual

advantage under this general trial; he had discovered, even to the philosophic eye of Wordsworth, a depth of benignity, very unusual in a Frenchman; and not of local, contracted benignity, but of large, illimitable, apostolic devotion to the service of the poor and the oppressed — a fact the more remarkable as he had all the pretensions in his own person of high birth and high rank; and, so far as he had any personal interest embarked in the struggle, should have allied himself with the aristocracy. But of selfishness in any shape, he had no vestiges; or, if he had, it showed itself in a slight tinge of vanity; yet, no — it was not vanity, but a radiant quickness of sympathy with the eye which expressed admiring love — sole relic of the chivalrous devotion once limited to the service of ladies. Now, again, he put on the garb of chivalry; it was a chivalry the noblest in the world, which opened his ear to the Pariah and the oppressed all over his mis-organized country. A more apostolic fervor of holy zealotry in this great cause, had not been seen since the days of Bartholomew las Casas, who showed the same excess of feeling in another direction This sublime dedication of his being to a cause which, in his conception of it, extinguished all petty considerations for himself, and made him thenceforwards a creature of the national will — 'a son of France,' in a more eminent and loftier sense than according to the heraldry of Europe — had extinguished even his sonsibility to the voice of worldly honor: 'injuries,' says Wordsworth —

'injuries
Made him more gracious.'

And so utterly had he submitted his own will or separate interests to the transcendent voice of his country, which, in the main, he believed to be now speaking authentically

for the first time since the foundations of Christendom, that, even against the motions of his own heart, he adopted the hatreds of the young Republic, growing cruel in his purposes towards the ancient oppressor, out of very excess of love for the oppressed; and, against the voice of his own order, as well as in stern oblivion of many early friendships, he became the champion of democracy in the struggle everywhere commencing with prejudice or feudal privilege. Nay, he went so far upon the line of this new crusade against the evils of the world, that he even accepted, with a conscientious defiance of his own inevitable homage to the erring spirit of loyalty embarked upon that cause, a commission in the Republican armies preparing to move against La Vendée; and, finally, in that cause, as commander-in-chief, he laid down his life. 'He perished,' says Wordsworth —

> —— 'perished, fighting in supreme command,
> Upon the banks of the unhappy Loire.'

Homewards fled all the English from a land which now was fast filling its prisons, and making ready the shambles for its noblest citizens. Thither also came Wordsworth; and then he spent his time for a year and more, in London chiefly, overwhelmed with shame and despondency for the disgrace and scandal brought upon liberty by the atrocities committed in that holy name. Upon this subject he dwells with deep emotion in the poem on his own life; and he records the awful triumph for retribution accomplished, which possessed him when crossing the sands of the great Bay of Morecamb from Lancaster to Ulverstone; and hearing from a horseman who passed him, in reply to his question — *Was there any news?* — 'Yes, that Robespierre had perished.' Immediately, a passion seized him, transport of almost epileptic fervor, prompting him as he

stood alone upon this perilous * waste of sands, to shout aloud anthems of thanksgiving for this great vindication of eternal justice. Still, though justice was done upon one great traitor to the cause, the cause itself was overcast with clouds too heavily to find support and employment for the hopes of a poet who had believed in a golden era ready to open upon the prospects of human nature. It gratified and solaced his heart, that the indignation of mankind should have wreaked itself upon the chief monsters that had outraged their nature and their hopes; but for the present he found it necessary to comfort his disappointment, by turning away from politics to studies less capable of deceiving his expectations.

From this period, therefore — that is, from the year 1794–95 — we may date the commencement of Wordsworth's entire self-dedication to poetry as the study and main business of his life. Somewhere about this period, also, (though, according to my remembrance of what Miss Wordsworth once told me, I think one year or so later,) his sister joined him; and they began to keep house

* That tract of the lake country which stretches southwards from Hawkshead and the lakes of Esthwaite, Windermere, and Coniston, to the little town of Ulverstone, (which may be regarded as the metropolis of the little romantic English Calabria, called Turness,) is divided from the main part of Lancashire by the estuary of Morecamb. The sea retires with the ebb tide to a vast distance, leaving the sands passable for a few hours for horses and carriages. But partly from the daily variation in these hours, partly from the intricacy of the pathless track which must be pursued, and partly from the galloping pace at which the returning tide comes in, many fatal accidents are continually occurring — sometimes to the too venturous traveller who has slighted the aid of guides — sometimes to the guides themselves when baffled and perplexed by mists. Gray the poet mentions one of the latter class, as having then recently occurred under affecting circumstances. Local tradition records a long list of interesting cases.

together: * once at Race Down, in Dorsetshire; once at Clevedon, on the coast of Somersetshire; then amongst the Quantock Hills, in the same county, or in that neighborhood; and, at length, at Alfoxton, a beautiful country-house, with a grove and shrubbery attached, belonging to Mr. St. Aubyn, a minor, and let (I believe) on the terms of keeping the house in repair. Whilst resident at this last place it was, as I have generally understood, and in the year 1797 or 1798, that Wordsworth first became acquainted with Coleridge; though, possibly, in the year I am wrong; for it occurs to me that, in a poem published in 1796, there is an allusion to a young writer of the name of Wordsworth, as one who had something austere in his style, but otherwise was more original than any other poet of the age; and it is probable that this, and knowledge of the poetry, would be subsequent to a personal knowledge of the author, considering the little circulation which any poetry of a Wordsworthian stamp would be likely to attain at that time.

* I do not, on consideration, know when they might begin to keep house together; but, by a passage in 'The Prelude,' they must have made a tour together as early as 1787.

CHAPTER XII.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

It was at Alfoxton that Miss Mary Hutchinson visited her cousins the Wordsworths; and there, or previously, in the North of England, at Stockton-upon-Tees and Darlington, that the attachment began between Miss Hutchinson and Wordsworth, which terminated in their marriage about the beginning of the present century. The marriage took place in the north; somewhere, I believe, in Yorkshire; and, immediately after the ceremony, Wordsworth brought his bride to Grasmere; in which most lovely of English valleys he had previously obtained, upon a lease of seven or eight years, the cottage in which I found him living at my first visit to him in November, 1807. I have heard that there was a paragraph inserted on this occasion in the *Morning Post* or *Courier* — and I have an indistinct remembrance of having once seen it myself — which described this event of the poet's marriage in the most ludicrous terms of silly pastoral sentimentality; the cottage being described as 'the abode of content and all the virtues,' the vale itself in the same puerile slang, and the whole event in a style of allegorical trifling about the muses, &c. The masculine and severe taste of Wordsworth made him peculiarly open to annoyance from such absurd trifling; and, unless his sense of the ludicrous overpowered his graver feelings, he must have been much

displeased with the paragraph. But, after all, I have understood that the whole affair was an unseasonable jest of Coleridge's or Lamb's.

To us who, in after years, were Wordsworth's friends, or at least intimate acquaintances — viz. to Professor Wilson and myself — the most interesting circumstance in this marriage, the one which perplexed us exceedingly, was the very possibility that it should ever have been brought to bear. For we could not conceive of Wordsworth as submitting his faculties to the humilities and devotion of courtship. That self-surrender — that prostration of mind, by which a man is too happy and proud to express the profundity of his service to the woman of his heart — it seemed a mere impossibility that ever Wordsworth should be brought to feel for a single instant; and what he did not sincerely feel, assuredly he was not the person to profess. Ah, happy, happy days! — in which, for a young man's heart that is deep and fervid in his affections, and passionate in his admirations, there is but one presence upon earth, one glory, one heaven of hope! — days how fugitive, how incapable of return, how imperishable to the heart of all that a man has lived! Wordsworth, I take it upon myself to say, had not the feelings within him which make this total devotion to a woman possible. There never lived the woman whom he would not have lectured and admonished under circumstances that should have seemed to require it; nor would he have conversed with her in any mood whatever without wearing an air of mild condescension to her understanding. To lie at her feet, to make her his idol, to worship her very caprices, and to adore the most unreasonable of her frowns — these things were impossible to Wordsworth; and, being so, never could he, in any emphatic sense, have been a lover.

A lover, therefore, in any passionate sense of the word, Wordsworth could not have been. And, moreover, it is remarkable that a woman who could dispense with that sort of homage in her suitor, is not of a nature to inspire such a passion. That same meekness which reconciles her to the tone of superiority and freedom in the manner of her suitor, and which may afterwards in a wife become a sweet domestic grace, strips her of that too charming irritation, captivating at once and tormenting, which lurks in feminine pride. If there be an enchantress's spell yet surviving in this age of ours, it is the haughty grace of maidenly pride — the womanly sense of dignity, even when most in excess, and expressed in the language of scorn — which tortures a man and lacerates his heart, at the same time that it pierces him with admiration.

> 'Oh, what a world of scorn looks beautiful
> In the repelling glances of her eye!'

And she who spares a man the agitations of this thraldom, robs him no less of its divinest transports. Wordsworth, however, who never could have laid aside his own nature sufficiently to have played *his* part in such an impassioned courtship, by suiting himself to this high sexual pride with the humility of a lover — and, perhaps, quite as little have enjoyed the spectacle of such a pride, or have viewed it in any degree as an attraction — it would to him have been a pure vexation. Looking down even upon the lady of his heart, as upon the rest of the world, from the eminence of his own intellectual superiority — viewing her, in fact, as a child — he would be much more disposed to regard any airs of feminine disdain she might assume, as the impertinence of girlish levity, than as the caprice of womanly pride. He would not, indeed, like Petruchio, have hinted a possibility that he might be

provoked to box her ears — for any mode of unmanly roughness would have seemed abominable to his nature, with the meanest of her sex; but much I fear that, in any case of dispute, he would have called even his mistress, 'Child! child!' and perhaps even (but this I do not say with the same certainty) might have bid her hold her tongue. Think of that, reader, with such lovers as I am placing in ideal contrast with these! — image to yourself the haughty beauty, and the majestic wrath, never to be propitiated after hearing such irreverent language — nay, worse than irreverent language — language implying disenchantment! Yet still, it may be said, can a man forget — absolutely and in all moments forget — his intellectual superiority? You yourself, for example, who write these sketches, did it follow of necessity that the woman you loved should be equal (or seem equal in your own eyes) to yourself in intellect? No; far from it. I could not, perhaps, have loved, with a perfect love, any woman whom I had felt to be my own equal intellectually; but then I never thought of her in that light, or under that relation. When the golden gate was opened, when the gate moved upon its golden hinges that opened to me the paradise of her society — when her young, melodious laughter sounded in my too agitated ear — did I think of any claims that *I* could have? Too happy if I might be permitted to lay all things at her feet, all things that I could call my own, or ever hope to do so — yes, though it had been possible that by power divine I should possess the earth, and the inheritance of the earth, —

'The sea, and all which they contain.' *

What was intellect, what was power, what was empire, if I had happened to possess them all in excess? These

* Paradise Regained.

things were not of the nature of, had no common nature with, did not resemble, were no approximation to, the sweet angelic power — power infinite, power deathless, power unutterable, which formed her virgin dowry. O heart, why art thou disquieted? Tempestuous, rebellious, heart! oh, wherefore art thou still dreaming of things so long gone by, of expectations that could not be fulfilled, that, being mortal, must, in some point, have a mortal taint! Empty, emp'y thoughts! vanity of vanities! Yet no; not always; for sometimes, after days of intellectual toil, when half the whole world is dreaming — I wrap my head in the bed-clothes, which hide even the faintest murmurs yet lingering from the fretful day —

> 'The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day;'

and then, through blinding tears, I see again that golden gate; again I stand waiting at the entrance; until dreams come that carry me once more to the Paradise beyond.

If, however, no lover, in a proper sense — though from many exquisite passages one might conceive that at some time of his life he was, as especially from the inimitable stanzas beginning —

> 'When she I loved was strong and gay,
> And like a rose in June;'

or perhaps (but less powerfully so, because here the passion, though profound, is less the *peculiar* passion of love) from the impassioned lamentation for 'the pretty Barbara,' beginning —

> 'Tis said that some have died for love:
> And here and there, amidst unhallowed ground
> In the cold north,' &c. &c.: —

yet, if no lover, or (which some of us have sometimes thought) a lover disappointed at some earlier period, by

the death of her he loved, or by some other fatal event, (for he always preserved a mysterious silence on the subject of that 'Lucy,' repeatedly alluded to or apostrophized in his poems, and I have heard, from gossiping people about Hawkshead, some snatches of tragical story, which, after all, might be an idle semi-fable, improved out of slight materials) — let this matter have been as it might — at all events he made, what for him turns out, a happy marriage. Few people have lived on such terms of entire harmony and affection as he has lived with the woman of his final choice. Indeed, the sweetness, almost unexampled, of temper, which, in her early and middle years, shed so sunny a radiance over Mrs. Wordsworth's manners, sustained by the happy life she led, the purity of her conscience, and the uniformity of her good health, made it impossible for anybody to have quarrelled with *her;* and whatever fits of ill temper Wordsworth might have — for, with all his philosophy, he had such fits, though rarely — met with no fuel to support them, except in the more irritable temperament of his sister. She was all fire, and an ardor, which, like that of the first Lord Shaftesbury,

'O'er-informed its tenement of clay;'

and, as this ardor looked out in every gleam of her wild eyes, (those 'wild eyes,' so finely noticed in the 'Tintern Abbey,') as it spoke in every word of her self-baffled utterance, as it gave a trembling movement to her very person and demeanor — easily enough it might happen, that any apprehension of an unkind word should with her kindle a dispute. It might have happened; and yet, to the great honor of both, having such impassioned temperaments, rarely it did happen — and this was the more remarkable, as I have been assured that both were, in

childhood, irritable, or even ill-tempered; and they were constantly together; for Miss Wordsworth was always ready to walk out — wet or dry, storm or sunshine, night or day; whilst Mrs. Wordsworth was completely dedicated to her maternal duties, and rarely left the house, unless when the weather was tolerable, or, at least, only for short rambles. I should not have noticed this trait in Wordsworth's occasional manners, had it been gathered from domestic or confidential opportunities. But, on the contrary, the first two occasions on which, after months' domestic intercourse with Wordsworth, I first became aware of his possible ill-humor and peevishness, were so public, that others, and those strangers, must have been equally made aware of the scene.

Having brought down the history of Wordsworth to the time of his marriage, I am reminded by that event to mention the singular good fortune, in all points of worldly prosperity, which has accompanied him through life. His marriage — the capital event of life — was fortunate; so were all the minor occasions of a prosperous life. He has himself described, in his 'Leech Gatherer,' the fears that, at one time, or at least in some occasional moments of his life, haunted him, lest at some period or other he might be reserved for poverty. 'Cold, pain, and hunger, and all fleshly ills,' occurred to his boding apprehension —

> 'And mighty poets in their misery dead.'

> 'He thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in its pride;
> Of him who walked in glory and in joy,
> Beside his plough upon the mountain-side.'

And, at starting on his career of life, certainly no man had plainer reasons for anticipating the worst evils that have ever persecuted poets, excepting only two reasons which might warrant him in hoping better; and these

two were — his great prudence, and the temperance of his daily life. He could not be betrayed into foolish engagements; he could not be betrayed into expensive habits. Profusion and extravagance had no hold over him, by any one passion or taste. He was not luxurious in anything; was not vain or even careful of external appearances — (not at least since he had left Cambridge, and visited a mighty nation in civil convulsions;) was not, even in the article of books, expensive. Very few books sufficed him; he was careless habitually of all the current literature, or indeed of any literature that could not be considered as enshrining the very ideal, capital, and elementary grandeur of the human intellect. It will be seen, further on, that in this extreme limitation of his literary sensibilities, he was as much assisted by that accident of his own intellectual condition, which the Germans of our days have so usefully brought forward to the consciousness, and by which so many anomalies of opinion are solved — viz. his extreme, intense, unparalleled *onesidedness*, (*einseitigkeit*,) as by any peculiar sanity of feeling. Thousands of books, that have given the most genuine and even rapturous delight to millions of ingenuous minds, for Wordsworth were absolutely a dead letter — closed and sealed up from his sensibilities and his powers of appreciation, not less than colors from a blind man's eye. Even the few books which his peculiar mind had made indispensable to him, were not so in the degree which they would have been to a man of more sedentary habits. He lived in the open air; and the enormity of pleasure which both he and his sister drew from the common appearances of nature and their everlasting variety — variety so infinite, that if no one leaf of a tree, or shrub, according to Leibnitz's principle, ever exactly resembled another in all its filaments, and their

arrangement, still less did any one day ever repea another in all its pleasurable elements — this pleasure was to him, in the stead of many libraries —

> 'One impulse from a vernal wood,
> Could teach him more of Man,
> Of moral evil, and of good,
> Than all the sages can.'

And he, we may be sure, who could draw

> ——— 'even from the meanest flower that blows,
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears;'

to whom the mere daisy, the pansy, the primrose, could furnish pleasures — not the puerile ones which his most puerile and worldly insulters imagined, but pleasures drawn from depths of reverie and meditative tenderness far beyond all power of *their* hearts to conceive: — that man would hardly need any large variety of books. In fact, there were only two provinces of literature in which Wordsworth could be looked upon as well read — Poetry and Ancient History. Nor do I believe that he would much have lamented, on his own account, if all books had perished, excepting the entire body of English poetry, and, perhaps, 'Plutarch's * Lives.'

With these simple or rather austere tastes, Wordsworth (it might seem) had little reason to fear poverty — certainly not with any moderate income; but meantime he had none. About the time when he left college, I have good grounds for believing that his whole regular income was precisely = 0. Some fragments must have survived

* I do not mean to insinuate that Wordsworth was at all in the dark about the inaccuracy and want of authentic weight attaching to Plutarch as an historian; but his business with Plutarch was not or purposes of research: he was satisfied with his fine moral effects.

from the funds devoted to his education; and with these, no doubt, he supported the expenses of his continental tours, and his year's residence in France. But, at length, cold, pain, and hunger, and 'all fleshly ills,' must have stared him in the face pretty earnestly. And hope of longer evading an unpleasant destiny of daily toil in some form or other there seemed absolutely none.

'For,' as he himself expostulates with himself —

> 'For how can he expect that others should
> Sow for him, build for *him*, and, at his call,
> Love him, who for himself will take no thought at all?'

In this dilemma he had all but resolved, as Miss Wordsworth once told me, to take pupils; and perhaps *that*, though odious enough, was the sole resource he had; for, with all his immeasurable genius, Wordsworth has not, even yet, and from long experience, acquired any popular talent of writing for the current press; and, at that period of his life, he was gloomily unfitted for bending to such a yoke. In this crisis of his fate, possibly it might be — a fact which a mere accident once caused Miss Wordsworth to mention to me, in a whispering tone, and (as if ashamed of it) she never recurred to it — that Wordsworth, for once, and once only, became a martyr to some nervous affection. *That* raised pity; but I could not forbear smiling at the remedy, or palliation, which his few friends adopted. Every night they played at cards with him, as the best mode of beguiling his sense of distress, whatever it might be; *cards*, which, in any part of the thirty-and-one years since *I* have known Wordsworth, could have had as little power to interest him, or to cheat him of sorrow, as marbles or a kite — (*Scotice*, a dragon!) However, so it was; for my information could not be questioned: it came from Miss Wordsworth.

The crisis, as I have said, had arrived for determining

the future color of his life. Memorable it is, that exactly in those critical moments when some decisive step had first become necessary, there happened the first instance of Wordsworth's good luck; and equally memorable that, at measured intervals, throughout the long sequel of his life since then, a regular succession of similar but superior God-sends have fallen in, to sustain his expenditure, duly as it grew with the growing claims upon his purse. A more fortunate man, I believe, does not exist than Wordsworth. The aid which now dropped from heaven, as it were, to enable him to range at will in paths of his own choosing, and

> 'Finally array
> His temples with the muses' diadem,'

came in the shape of a bequest from Raisley Calvert, a young man of good family in Cumberland, who died about this time of pulmonary consumption. A very remarkable young man he must have been, this Raisley Calvert, to have discerned, at this early period, that future superiority in Wordsworth which so few people suspected. He was the brother of a Cumberland gentleman, whom I have seen; a generous man, doubtless; for he made no sort of objections (though legally, I have heard, he might) to his brother's farewell memorial of regard; a good man to all his dependents, as I have generally understood, in the neighborhood of Windy Brow, his mansion, near Keswick; and, as Southey always said, (who must know better than I could do,) a man of strong natural endowments; else, as his talk was of oxen, I might have made the mistake of supposing him to be, in heart and soul, what he was in profession — a mere farming country gentleman, whose ambition was chiefly planted upon turning up mighty turnips. The

sum left by Raisley Calvert was £900; and it was laid out in an annuity. This was the basis of Wordsworth's prosperity in life; and upon this he has built up, by a series of accessions, in which each step, taken separately for itself, seems perfectly natural, whilst the total result has undoubtedly something wonderful about it, the present goodly edifice of his fortunes. Next in the series, came the present Lord Lonsdale's repayment of his predecessor's debt. Upon that, probably, it was that Wordsworth felt himself entitled to marry. Then, I believe, came some fortune with Miss Hutchinson; then — that is, fourthly — some worthy uncle of the same lady was pleased to betake himself to a better world, leaving to various nieces, and especially to Mrs. Wordsworth, something or other — I forget what, but it was expressed by thousands of pounds. At this moment, Wordsworth's family had begun to increase; and the worthy old uncle, like everybody else in Wordsworth's case, (I wish I could say the same in my own,) finding his property very clearly 'wanted,' and, as people would tell him, 'bespoke,' felt how very indelicate it would look for him to stay any longer; and so off he moved. But Wordsworth's family, and the wants of that family, still continued to increase; and the next person — viz. the fifth — who stood in the way, and must, therefore, have considered himself rapidly growing into a nuisance, was the Stamp-Distributor for the county of Westmoreland. About March, 1814, I think it was, that his very comfortable situation was wanted. Probably it took a month for the news to reach him; because in April, and not before, feeling that he had received a proper notice to quit, he, good man, this stamp-distributor, like all the rest, distributed himself and his office into two different places — the latter falling, of course, into the hands of Wordsworth.

This office, which it was Wordsworth's pleasure to speak of as 'a little one,' yielded, I believe, somewhere about £500 a year. Gradually, even *that*, with all former sources of income, became insufficient, which ought not to surprise anybody; for a son at Oxford, as a gentleman commoner, would spend, at the least, £300 per annum; and there were other children. Still it is wrong to say that it *had* become insufficient; as usual, it had not come to that; but, on the first symptoms arising that it would soon come to that, somebody, of course, had notice to consider himself a sort of nuisance elect — in this case, it was the distributor of stamps for the county of Cumberland. His district was absurdly large; and what so reasonable as that he should submit to a Polish partition of his profits — no, not Polish; for, on reflection, such a partition neither was nor could be attempted with regard to an actual incumbent. But then, since people had such consideration for him as not to remodel the office so long as he lived, on the other hand, the least he could do for 'people' in return, so as to show his sense of this consideration, was not to trespass on so much goodness longer than necessary. Accordingly, here, as in all cases before, the *Deus ex machinâ* who invariably interfered when any *nodus* arose in Wordsworth's affairs, such as could be considered *vindice dignus*, caused the distributor to begone into a region where no stamps are wanted, about the very month, or so, when an additional £400 per annum became desirable. This, or perhaps more, was understood to have been added by the new arrangement, to the Westmoreland distributorship: the small towns of Keswick and Cockermouth, together with the important one of Whitehaven, being severed, under this regulation, from their old dependency, or Cumberland, (to which geographically

they belonged,) and transferred to the small territory of rocky Westmoreland, the sum total of whose inhabitants was, at that time, not much above 50,000; of which number, one third, or nearly so, might be collected into the only important town of Kendal; but, of the other two thirds, a larger proportion was a simple agricultural or pastoral population, than anywhere else in England. In Westmoreland, therefore, it may be supposed that the stamp demand could not have been so great, not, perhaps, by three quarters, as in Cumberland; which, besides having a population of 160,000, had more and larger towns. The result of this new distribution, was something that approached to an equalization of the districts — giving to each, as was said in round terms, a thousand a year; but, in more accurate terms, perhaps £900.

Thus I have traced Wordsworth's ascent through its several steps and stages, to what, for his moderate desires and habits so philosophic, may be fairly considered opulence. And it must rejoice every man, who joins in the public homage *now* rendered to his powers, (and what man is to be found that more or less does not?) to hear, with respect to one so lavishly endowed by nature, that he has not been neglected by fortune; that he has never had the finer edge of his sensibilities dulled by the sad anxieties, the degrading fears, the miserable dependencies of debt; that he has been blessed with competency even when poorest; has had hope and cheerful prospects in reversion, through every stage of his life; that at all times he has been liberated from *reasonable* anxieties about the final interests of his children; that at all times he has been blessed with leisure, the very amplest that ever man enjoyed, for intellectual pursuits the most delightful; yes, that even for those delicate and coy pursuits, he has possessed, in combination, all the conditions for their

most perfect culture — the leisure, the ease, the solitude, the society, the domestic peace, the local scenery — Paradise for his eye, in Miltonic beauty, lying outside his windows, Paradise for his heart, in the perpetual happiness of his own fireside; and, finally, when increasing years might be supposed to demand something more of modern luxuries, and expanding intercourse with society in its most polished forms, something more of refined elegances, that his means, still keeping pace, in almost arithmetical ratio, with his wants, had shed the graces of art upon the failing powers of nature, had stripped infirmity of discomfort, and (so far as the necessities of things will allow) had placed the final stages of life, by means of many compensations, by universal praise, by plaudits reverberated from senates, benedictions wherever his poems have penetrated, honor, troops of friends — in short, by all that miraculous prosperity can do to evade the primal decrees of nature — had placed the final stages upon a level with the first. This report of Wordsworth's success in life will rejoice thousands of hearts. And a good nature will sympathize with that joy, will exult in that exultation, no matter for any private grievances, and with a *non obstante* to any wrong, however stinging, which it may suppose itself to have suffered. Yet, William Wordsworth, nevertheless, if you ever allowed yourself to forget the *human* tenure of these mighty blessings — if, though wearing your honors justly — most justly, as respects A. and B., this man and that man — you have forgotten that *no* man can challenge such trophies by any absolute or meritoricus title, as respects the dark powers which give and take away — if, in the blind spirit of presumption, you have insulted the less prosperous fortunes of a brother, frail, indeed, but not dishonorably frail, and in his very frailty — that is, in his failing exertions — and for the deficient

measure of his energies, (doubtless too much below the standard of reasonable expectations,) able to plead that which you never cared to ask — then, if (instead of being sixty-eight years old) you were $6\frac{8}{2}$, I should warn you to listen for the steps of Nemesis approaching from afar; and, were it only in relation to your own extremity of good fortune, I would say, in the case of your being a young man, lavish as she may have been hitherto, and for years to come may still be —

> 'Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
> Her audit, though delay'd, answered must be,
> And her *quietus* is —— to render thee.' *

But now, reverting to the subject of Wordsworth's prosperity, I have numbered up six separate stages of good luck — six instances of pecuniary showers emptying themselves into his very bosom, at the very moments when they *began* to be needed, on the first symptoms that they might be wanted — accesses of fortune stationed, upon his road, like repeating frigates, connecting, to all appearance some preconcerted line of operations; and, amidst the tumults of chance, wearing as much the air of purpose and design, as if they supported a human plan — so much the more, also, to a thoughtful observer, as the subject of this overflowing favor from the blind goddess, happened, by the rarest of accidents, to be that man whom many of us would have declared the most worthy of that favor, most of us, perhaps, as in the case of Themistocles, would have declared, at the very least, second best. I have come down to the sixth case. Whether there were any seventh, I do not know: but confident I feel, that, had a seventh been required by circumstances, a seventh would have happened. At the

* Shakspeare's Sonnets.

same time, every reader will, of course, understand me to mean, that not only was it utterly out of the power or will of Wordsworth to exert any, the very slightest influence upon these cases, not only was this impossible — not only was it impossible to the moral nature of Wordsworth, that he should even express that sort of interest in the event, which is sometimes intimated to the incumbents of a place or church-living by sudden inquiries after their health from eager expectants — but also, in every one of the instances recorded, he could have had not the slightest knowledge beforehand of any interest at issue for himself. This explanation I make to forestall the merest possibility of misapprehension. And yet, for all that, so true it is, that still, as Wordsworth needed a place or a fortune, the holder of that place or fortune was immediately served with a summons to surrender it — so certainly was this impressed upon my belief, as one of the blind necessities, making up the prosperity and fixed destiny of Wordsworth, that, for myself — had I happened to know of any peculiar adaptation in an estate or office of mine, to an existing need of Wordsworth's — forthwith, and with the speed of a man running for his life, I would have laid it down at his feet. 'Take it,' I would have said — 'take it — or in three weeks I shall be a dead man.'

Well — let me pause: I think the reader is likely, by this time, to have a slight notion of *my* notion of Wordsworth's inevitable prosperity — and the sort of *lien* that he had upon the incomes of other men who happened to stand in his way. The same prosperity attended the other branches of the family, with the single exception of John, the brother who perished in the Abergavenny: and even he was prosperous up to the moment of his fatal accident. As to Miss Wordsworth, who will, by some people, be

classed amongst the non-prosperous, I rank her amongst the most fortunate of women; or, at least, if regard be had to that period of life which is most capable of happiness. Her fortune, after its repayment by Lord Lonsdale, was, much of it, confided with a sisterly affection, to the use of her brother John; and most of it perished in his ship. How much I never felt myself entitled to ask; but certainly a part was on that occasion lost irretrievably. Either it was that only a partial insurance had been effected, or else the nature of the accident, being in home waters, (off the coast of Dorsetshire,) might, by the nature of the contract, have taken the case out of the benefit of the policy. The loss, however, had it even been total, for a single sister amongst a family of flourishing brothers, could not be of any lasting importance. A much larger number of voices would proclaim her to have been unfortunate in life, because she made no marriage connection; and certainly the insipid as well as unfeeling ridicule which descends so plentifully from vulgar minds, upon those women who, perhaps from strength of character, have refused to make such a connection where it promised little of elevated happiness, *does* make the state of singleness somewhat of a trial to the patience of many; and to many the cruelty of this trial has proved a snare for beguiling them of their honorable resolutions. Doubtless the most elevated form, and the most impassioned, of human happiness, cannot be had out of marriage. But, as the opportunities are rare in which all the conditions concur for *such* connections, how important it is that the dignity of noble-minded (and, in the lowest case, of firm-minded) women, should be upheld by society in the honorable election they make of a self-dependent state of virgin seclusion, by preference to a heartless marriage! Such women, as Mrs. Trollope justly remarks, fill a place

in society which, in their default, could not be supplied, and are disposable for duties requiring a tenderness and a punctuality that could not be hoped from women pre-occupied with household or maternal claims. In another point, Mrs. Trollope is right: few women live unmarried from necessity — few indeed. Miss Wordsworth, to *my* knowledge, had several offers — amongst them, one from Hazlitt; all, without a moment's hesitation, she rejected decisively. And she did right. A happier life, by far, was hers in youth, coming as near as difference of scenery and difference of relations would permit, to that which was promised to Ruth — the Ruth of her brother's * creation — by the youth who came from Georgia's shore; for, though not upon American savannas, or Canadian lakes —

> 'With all their fairy crowds
> Of islands, that together lie
> As quietly as spots of sky
> Amongst the evening clouds' —

yet, amongst the loveliest scenes of sylvan England, and (at intervals) of sylvan Germany — amongst lakes, too, far better fitted to give the *sense* of their own character than the inland seas of America, and amongst mountains as romantic and loftier than many of the chief ranges in that country — her time fleeted away like some golden

* 'The Ruth of her brother's creation:' — so I express it, because so much in the development of the story and situations necessarily belongs to the poet. Else, for the mere outline of the story, it was founded upon fact: Wordsworth himself told me, in general terms, that the case which suggested the poem was that of an American lady, whose husband forsook her at the very place of embarkation from England, under circumstances and under expectations upon her part, very much the same as those of Ruth. I am afraid however, that the husband was an attorney

age, or like the life of primeval man; and she, like Ruth, was for years allowed

> 'To run, though *not* a bride,
> A sylvan huntress, by the side'

of him to whom, like Ruth, she had dedicated her days; and to whose children, afterwards, she dedicated a love like that of mothers. Dear Miss Wordsworth! How noble a creature did she seem when I first knew her! — and when, on the very first night which I passed in her brother's company, he read to me, in illustration of something he was saying, a passege from Fairfax's Tasso, ending pretty nearly with these words —

> 'Amidst the broad fields and the endless wood
> The lofty lady kept her maidenhood' —

I thought that, possibly, he had his sister in his thoughts. Yet 'lofty' was hardly the right word. Miss Wordsworth was too ardent and fiery a creature to maintain the reserve essential to dignity; and dignity was the last thing one thought of in the presence of one so artless, so fervent in her feelings, and so embarrassed in their utterance — sometimes, also, in the attempt to check them. It must not, however, be supposed that there was any silliness or weakness of enthusiasm about her. She was under the continual restraint of severe good sense, though liberated from that false shame which, in so many persons, accompanies all expressions of natural emotion; and she had too long enjoyed the ennobling conversation of her brother, and his admirable comments on the daily reading which they pursued in common, to fail in any essential point of ogic or propriety of thought. Accordingly, her letters, though the most careless and unelaborate — nay, the most hurried that can be imagined — are models of good sense and just feeling. In short, beyond any person I have

known in this world, Miss Wordsworth was the creature of impulse; but, as a woman most thoroughly virtuous and well-principled, as one who could not fail to be kept right by her own excellent heart, and as an intellectual creature from her cradle, with much of her illustrious brother's peculiarity of mind — finally, as one who had been, in effect, educated and trained by that very brother — she won the sympathy and the respectful regard of every man worthy to approach her. All of us loved her — by which *us* I mean especially Professor Wilson and myself, together with such Oxford or Cambridge men, or men from Scotland, as either of us or as others introduced to her society. And many a time, when the Professor and myself — travelling together in solitary places, sleeping in the same bedroom, or (according to accidents of wayfaring life) in the same bed — have fallen into the most confidential interchange of opinions upon a family in which we had both so common and so profound an interest, whatever matter of anger or complaint we might find or fancy in others, Miss Wordsworth's was a name privileged from censure; or, if a smile were bestowed upon some eccentricity or innocent foible, it was with the tenderness that we should have shown to a sister. Properly, and in a spirit of prophecy, was she named *Dorothy;* for, as that name apparently predestines her who bears it to figure rather in the character of aunt than of mother, (insomuch, that I have rarely happened to hear this name, except, indeed, in Germany, without the prefix of aunt,) so, also, in its Greek meaning,* *gift of God*, well did this name

* Of course, therefore, it is essentially the same name as *Theodora* — the same elements being only differently arranged. Yet how opposite is the impression upon the mind! and chiefly, I suppose, from the too prominent effect of this name in the case of Justinian's scandalous wife.

prefigure the relation in which she stood to Wordsworth, the mission with which she was charged — to wait upon him as the tenderest and most faithful of domestics; to love him as a sister: to sympathize with him as a confidante; to counsel him as one gifted with a power of judging that stretched as far as his own for producing; to cheer him and sustain him by the natural expression of her feelings — so quick, so ardent, so unaffected — upon the probable effect of whatever thoughts, plans, images he might conceive; finally, and above all other ministrations, to ingraft, by her sexual sense of beauty, upon his masculine austerity that delicacy and those graces, which else (according to the grateful acknowledgments of his own maturest retrospect) it would not have had.

> 'The blessing of my later years
> Was with me when I was a boy:
> She gave me hopes, she gave me fears,
> A heart the fountain of sweet tears.
> . . . . . .
> And love, and thought, and joy.'

And elsewhere he describes her, in a philosophic poem, still in MS., as one who planted flowers and blossoms with her feminine hand upon what might else have been an arid rock — massy, indeed, and grand, but repulsive from the severity of its features. I may sum up in one brief abstract the sum total of Miss Wordsworth's character, as a companion, by saying, that she was the very wildest (in the sense of the most natural) person I have ever known; and also the truest, most inevitable, and, at the same time, the quickest and readiest in her sympathy with either joy or sorrow, with laughter or with tears, with the realities of life or the larger realities of the poets!

Meantime, amidst all this fascinating furniture of her mind, won from nature, from solitude, from enlightened companionship, Miss Wordsworth was thoroughly defi-

cient (some would say painfully deficient — I say charmingly deficient) in ordinary female accomplishments, as '*Cousin* Mary,' in Miss Mitford's delightful sketch. French, she might have barely enough to read a plain modern page of narrative; Italian, I question whether any; German, just enough to insult the German literati. by showing how little she had found them or their writings necessary to her heart. The 'Luise' of Voss, the 'Hermann and Dorothea' of Goethe, she had begun to translate, as young ladies do 'Telemaque;' but, like them, had chiefly cultivated the first two pages; * with the third, she had a slender acquaintance, and with the fourth, she meditated an intimacy at some future day. Music, in her solitary and out-of-doors life, she could have little reason for cultivating; nor is it possible that any woman can draw the enormous energy requisite for this attainment upon a *modern* scale of perfection, out of any other principle, than that of vanity (at least of great value for social applause) or of deep musical sensibility; neither of which belonged to Miss Wordsworth's constitution of mind. But, as everybody agrees in our days to think this accomplishment of no value whatever, and, in fact, *unproduceable*, unless in an exquisite state of culture, no complaint could be made on that score, nor any surprise felt. But the case in which the irregularity of Miss Wordsworth's education *did* astonish one, was in that part which respected

* Viz. 'Calypso ne savoit se consoler du depart,' &c. For how long a period, viz. nearly two centuries has Calypso been inconsolable in the morning studies of young ladies! As Fenelon's most dreary romance always opened at one or other of these three earliest and dreary pages, naturally to my sympathetic fancy the poor unnappy goddess seemed to be eternally aground on this Goodwin Sand of inconsolability. It is amongst the standing hypocrisies of the world, that most people affect a reverence for this book, which nobody reads.

her literary knowledge. In whatever she read, or neglected to read, she had obeyed the single impulse of her own heart; where that led her, *there* she followed: where that was mute or indifferent, not a thought had she to bestow upon a writer's high reputation, or the call for some acquaintance with his works, to meet the demands of society. And thus the strange anomaly arose, of a woman deeply acquainted with some great authors, whose works lie pretty much out of the fashionable beat; able, moreover, in her own person, to produce brilliant effects; able, on some subjects, to write delightfully, and with the impress of originality upon all she uttered — and yet ignorant of great classical works in her own mother tongue, and careless of literary history, unless, where it touched upon some topic of household interest, in a degree which at once exiled her from the rank and privileges of *blue-stockingism.*

The reader may perhaps have objected silently to the illustration drawn from Miss Mitford, that 'Cousin Mary' does not effect her fascinations out of pure negations. Such negations, from the mere startling effect of their oddity in this present age, might fall in with the general current of her attractions; but Cousin Mary's undoubtedly lay in the *positive* witcheries of a manner and a character, transcending, by force of irresistible nature, (as in a similar case recorded by Wordsworth in 'The Excursion,') all the pomp of nature and art united, as seen in ordinary creatures. Now, in Miss Wordsworth, there were certainly no 'Cousin Mary' fascinations of manner and deportment, that snatch a grace beyond the reach of art: *there* she was indeed painfully deficient; for hurry mars and defeats even the most ordinary expression of the feminine character, its gentleness: abruptness and trepidation leave often a joint impression of what seems for an instan.

both rudeness and ungracefulness: and the least painful impression was that of unsexual awkwardness; — but the point in which Miss Wordsworth made the most ample amends for all that she wanted of more customary accomplishments, was, this very originality and native freshness of intellect, which settled with so bewitching an effect upon some of her writings, and upon many a sudden remark or ejaculation, extorted by something or other that struck her eye, in the clouds, or in coloring, or in accidents of light and shade, of form, or combination of form. To talk of her 'writings,' is too pompous an expression, or at least far beyond any pretensions that she ever made for herself. Of poetry she has written little indeed; and that little not, in my opinion, of much merit. The verses published by her brother, and beginning — 'Which way does the wind come?' meant only as nursery lines, are certainly wild and pretty; but the other specimen is likely to strike most readers as feeble and trivial in the sentiment. Meantime, the book which is in very deed a monument to her power of catching and expressing all the hidden beauties of natural scenery, with a felicity of diction, a truth, and strength, that far transcend Gilpin, or professional writers on those subjects, is her record of a tour in Scotland, made about the year 1802. This book, unless my recollection of it, from a period now gone by for thirty years, has deceived me, is absolutely unique in its class: and, though it never could be very popular, from the minuteness of its details, and the luxuriation of the descriptions, yet I believe no person has ever been favored with a sight of it, that has not regretted that it is not published. Its own extraordinary merit, apart from the interest which *now* invests the name of Wordsworth could not fail to procure purchasers for one edition, on its first appearance.

Coleridge was of the party at first; but afterwards, under some attack of rheumatism, found or thought it necessary to leave them. Melancholy it would be at this time, thirty-six years and more from the era of that tour, to read it under the afflicting remembrances of all which has been suffered in the interval by two at least out of the three who composed the travelling party; for I fear that Miss Wordsworth has suffered not much less than Coleridge: and, in any general expression of it, from the same cause — viz. an excess of pleasurable excitement and luxurious sensibility, sustained in youth by a constitutional glow from animal causes, but drooping as soon as that was withdrawn. It is painful to point a moral from any story connected with those whom one loves or has loved; painful to look for one moment towards any 'improvement' of such a case, especially where there is no reason to tax the parties with any criminal contribution to their own sufferings, exeept through that relaxation of the will and its potential energies, through which most of us, at some time or other — I myself too deeply and sorrowfully — stand accountable to our own consciences. Not, therefore, with any more intention of speaking in a monitorial or censorial character, than in passing, after dark, through Grasmere churchyard, and trespassing a little to the left, I could be supposed to have the intention of trampling upon the grave of one who lies buried near the pathway, and whom once I loved in extremity, do I here notice a defect in Miss Wordsworth's self-education of something that might have mitigated the sort of suffering which, more or less, ever since the period of her too genial, too radiant youth, I suppose her to have struggled with. I have mentioned the narrow basis on which her literary interests had been made to rest — the exclusive character of her reading, and the utter want of pretension, and of all that

looks like *blue-stockingism* in the style of her habitual conversation and mode of dealing with literature. Now, to me it appears, upon reflection, that it would have been far better had Miss Wordsworth condescended a little to the ordinary mode of pursuing literature; better for her own happiness if she *had* been a blue-stocking: or, at least, if she had been, in good earnest, a writer for the press, with the pleasant cares and solicitudes of one who has some little ventures, as it were, on that vast ocean.

We all know with how womanly and serene a temper literature has been pursued by Joanna Baillie, by Miss Mitford, and other women of admirable genius — with how absolutely no sacrifice or loss of feminine dignity they have cultivated the profession of authorship; and, if we could hear their report, I have no doubt that the little cares of correcting proofs, and the forward-looking solicitudes connected with the mere business arrangements of new publications, would be numbered amongst the minor pleasures of life; whilst the more elevated cares connected with the intellectual business of such projects, must inevitably have done much to solace the troubles, which as human beings, they cannot but have experienced; and even to scatter flowers upon their path. Mrs. Johnstone, of Edinburgh, has pursued the profession of literature — the noblest of professions, and the only one open to both sexes alike — with even more assiduity, and as a *daily* occupation; and, I have every reason to believe with as much benefit to her own happiness, as to the instruction and amusement of her readers: — for the petty cares of authorship are agreeable, and its serious cares are ennobling. More especially is such an occupation useful to a woman without children, and without any *prospective* resources; resources in objects that involve hopes growing and unfulfilled. It is too much to expect

of any woman (or man either) that her mind should support itself in a pleasurable activity, under the drooping energies of life, by resting on the past or on the present; some interest in reversion, some subject of hope from day to day, must be called in to reinforce the animal fountains of good spirits. Had that been opened for Miss Wordsworth, I am satisfied that she would have passed a more cheerful middle-age, and would not, at any period, have yielded to that nervous depression which, I grieve to hear, has clouded her latter days. Nephews and nieces, whilst young and innocent, are as good almost as sons and daughters to a fervid and loving heart that has carried them in her arms from the hour they were born. But, after a nephew has grown into a huge hulk of a man, six feet high, and as stout as a bullock; after he has come to have children of his own, lives at a distance, and finds occasion to talk chiefly of oxen and turnips — no offence to him — he ceases to be an object of any very profound sentiment. There is nothing in such a subject to rouse the flagging pulses of the heart, and to sustain a fervid spirit, to whom, at the very best, human life offers little of an adequate or sufficing interest, unless when idealized by the magic of the mighty poets. Farewell, Miss Wordsworth! farewell, impassioned Dorothy! I have not seen you for many a day — shall never see you again perhaps; but shall attend your steps with tender thought, so long as I hear of you living: so will Professor Wilson; and, from two hearts, at least, that loved and admired you in your fervid prime, it may sometimes cheer the gloom of your depression to be assured of never-failing remembrance full of love and respectful pity.

Here ceases my record of the life and its main incidents, so far as they are known to me, of William Wordsworth; to which, on account of the important services which she

has rendered him; on account of the separate interest which, apart from those services, belongs to her own mind and character; on account of the singular counterpart which in some features they offer to those of her brother; and, on account of the impressive coincidence and parallelism in this remarkable dedication of Dorothy to William Wordsworth, with that of Mary to Charles Lamb — I have thought that it would be a proper *complement* of the whole record, to subjoin a very especial notice of his sister. Miss Wordsworth would have merited a separate notice in any biographical dictionary of our times, had there even been no William Wordsworth in existence.

I have traced the history of each until the time when I became personally acquainted with them; and, henceforwards, anything which it may be interesting to know with respect to either, will naturally come forward, not in a separate narrative, but in connection with my own life; for, in the following year, I became myself the tenant of that pretty cottage in which I found them; and from that time, for many years, my life flowed on in daily union with theirs.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND ROBERT SOUTHEY.

THAT night — the first of my personal intercourse with Wordsworth — the first in which I saw him face to face — was (it is little, indeed, to say) memorable: it was marked by a change even in the physical condition of my nervous system. Long disappointment —hope for ever baffled, (and why should it be less painful because *self*-baffled?) — vexation and self-blame, almost self-contempt, at my own want of courage to face the man whom of all since the Flood I most yearned to behold: — these feelings had impressed upon my nervous sensibilities a character of irritation — agitation — restlessness — eternal self-dissatisfaction — which were gradually gathering into a distinct, well-defined type, that would, but for youth — almighty youth, and the spirit of youth — have shaped itself into some nervous complaint, wearing symptoms *sui generis*, (for most nervous complaints, in minds that are at all eccentric, will be *sui generis*;) and, perhaps, finally, have been immortalized in some medical journal as the anomalous malady of an interesting young gentleman, aged

twenty-two, who was supposed to have studied too severely, and to have perplexed his brain with German metaphysics. To this result things tended; but, in one hour, all passed away. It was gone, never to return. The spiritual being whom I had anticipated — for, like Eloise,

> 'My fancy framed him of th' angelic kind —
> Some emanation of the all beauteous mind' —

this ideal creature had at length been seen — seen 'in the flesh' — seen with fleshly eyes; and now, though he did not cease for years to wear something of the glory and the *aureola* which, in Popish legends, invests the head of superhuman beings, yet it was no longer as a being to be feared — it was as Raphael, the 'affable' angel, who conversed on the terms of man with man, that I now regarded him.

It was four o'clock, perhaps, when we arrived. At that hour the daylight soon declined; and, in an hour and a half, we were all collected about the tea-table. This, with the Wordsworths, under the simple rustic system of habits which they cherished then, and for twenty years after, was the most delightful meal in the day; just as dinner is in great cities, and for the same reason — because it was prolonged into a meal of leisure and conversation. And the reason why any meal favors and encourages conversation is pretty much the same as that which accounts for the breaking down of so many lawyers, and generally their ill-success in the House of Commons. In the courts of law, when a man is haranguing upon general and abstract topics, if at any moment he feels getting beyond his depth, if he finds his anchor driving, he can always bring up, and drop his anchor anew upon the *terra firma* of his case: the facts of this, as furnished by his brief, always assure him of a retreat as soon as he finds his more

general thoughts failing him; and the consciousness of this retreat, by inspiring confidence, makes it much less probable that they *should* fail. But, in Parliament, where the advantage of a case with given facts and circumstances, or the details of a statistical report, does not offer itself once in a dozen times that a member has occasion to speak — where he has to seek unpremeditated arguments and reasonings of a general nature, from the impossibility of wholly evading the previous speeches that may have made an impression upon the House; — this necessity, at any rate a trying one to most people, is doubly so to one who has always walked in the leading-strings of a *case* — always swam with the help of bladders, in the conscious resource of his *facts*. The reason, therefore, why a lawyer succeeds ill as a senator, is to be found in the sudden removal of an artificial aid. Now, just such an artificial aid is furnished to timid or to unready men by a dinner-table, and the miscellaneous attentions, courtesies, or occupations which it enjoins or permits, as by the fixed memoranda of a brief. If a man finds the ground slipping from beneath him in a discussion — if, in a tide of illustration, he suddenly comes to a pause for want of matter — he can make a graceful close, a self-interruption, that shall wear the interpretation of forbearance, or even win the rhetorical credit of an *aposiopesis*, (according to circumstances,) by stopping to perform a duty of the occasion: pressed into a dilemma by some political partisan, one may evade it by pressing him to take a little of the dish before one; or, plagued for a reason which is not forthcoming, one may deprecate this logical rigor by inviting one's tormentor to wine. In short, what I mean to say is, that a dinner party, or any meal which is made the meal for intellectual relaxation, must for ever offer the advantages of a *palæstra*, in which the weapons are foils and

the wounds not mortal: in which, whilst the interest is that of a real, the danger is that of a sham fight: in which whilst there is always an opportunity for swimming into deep waters, there is always a retreat into shallow ones. And it may be laid down as a maxim, that no nation is civilized to the height of its capacity until it *has* one such meal. With our ancestors of sixty years back, this meal was supper: with the Athenians and Greeks it was dinner,* (cœna and δεῖπνον,) as with ourselves; only that the hour was a very early one, in consequence, partly, of the early bedtime of these nations, (which again was occasioned by the dearness of candle-light to the mass of those who had political rights, on whose account the forensic meetings, the visits of clients to their patrons, &c., opened the political day by four hours earlier than with us,) and partly in consequence of the uncommercial habits of the ancients — commerce having at no time created an aristocracy of its own, and, therefore, having at no time and in no city (no, not Alexandria nor Carthage) dictated the household and social arrangements, or the distribution of its hours.

I have been led insensibly into this digression. I now resume the thread of my narrative. That night, after hearing conversation superior by much, in its tone and subject, to any which I had ever heard before — one ex-

* A curious dissertation might be written on this subject. Meantime, it is remarkable that almost all modern nations have committed the blunder of supposing the Latin word for supper to be *cœna*, and of dinner, *prandium*. Now, the essential definition of dinner is, that which is the main meal — (what the French call the great meal.) By that or any test, (for example, the *time*, three P. M.) the Roman cœna was dinner. Even Louis XII., whose death is partly ascribed to his having altered his dinner hour from nine to eleven A. M. in compliment to his young English bride, did not *sup* at three P. M

ception only being made, in favor of Coleridge, whose style differed from Wordsworth's in this, that being far more agile and more comprehensive, consequently more showy and surprising, it was less impressive and weighty; for Wordsworth's was slow in its movement, solemn, majestic. After a luxury so rare as this, I found myself, about eleven at night, in a pretty bedroom, about fourteen feet by twelve. Much I feared that this might turn out the best room in the house; and it illustrates the hospitality of my new friends, to mention that it was. Early in the morning, I was awoke by a little voice, issuing from a little cottage bed in an opposite corner, soliloquizing in a low tone. I soon recognized the words — 'Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried;' and the voice I easily conjectured to be that of the eldest amongst Wordsworth's children, a son, and at that time about three years old. He was a remarkably fine boy in strength and size, promising (which has in fact been realized) a much more powerful person, physically, than that of his father. Miss Wordsworth I found making breakfast in the little sitting-room. No urn was there; no glittering breakfast service; a kettle boiled upon the fire, and everything was in harmony with these unpretending arrangements. I, the son of a merchant, and naturally, therefore, in the midst of luxurious (though not ostentatious) display from my childhood, had never seen so humble a *ménage:* and contrasting the dignity of the man with this honorable poverty, and this courageous avowal of it, his utter absence of all effort to disguise the simple truth of the case, I felt my admiration increase to the uttermost by all I saw. This, thought I to myself, is, indeed, in his own words —

'Plain living, and high thinking.'

This is indeed to reserve the humility and the parsimonies

of life for its bodily enjoyments, and to apply its lavishness and its luxury to its enjoyments of the intellect. So might Milton have lived; so Marvell. Throughout the day — which was rainy — the same style of modest hospitality prevailed. Wordsworth and his sister — myself being of the party — walked out in spite of the rain, and made the circuit of the two lakes, Grasmere and its dependency Rydal — a walk of about six miles. On the third day, Mrs. Coleridge having now pursued her journey northward to Keswick, and having, at her departure, invited me, in her own name as well as Southey's, to come and see them, Wordsworth proposed that we should go thither in company, but not by the direct route — a distance of only thirteen miles: this we were to take in our road homeward; our outward-bound journey was to be by way of Ulleswater — a circuit of forty-three miles.

On the third morning after my arrival in Grasmere, I found the whole family, except the two children, prepared for the expedition across the mountains. I had heard of no horses, and took it for granted that we were to walk; however, at the moment of starting, a cart — the common farmers' cart of the country — made its appearance; and the driver was a bonny young woman of the vale. Such a vehicle I had never in my life seen used for such a purpose; but what was good enough for the Wordsworths was good enough for me; and, accordingly, we were all carted along to the little town, or large village, of Ambleside — three and a half miles distant. Our style of travelling occasioned no astonishment; on the contrary, we met a smiling salutation wherever we appeared — Miss Wordsworth being, as I observed, the person most familiarly known of our party, and the one who took upon herself the whole expenses of the flying colloquies exchanged with stragglers on the road. What struck me

with most astonishment, however, was the liberal manner of our fair driver, who made no scruple of taking a leap, with the reins in her hand, and seating herself dexterously upon the shafts (or, in Westmoreland phrase, the *trams*) of the cart. From Ambleside — and without one foot of intervening flat ground — begins to rise the famous ascent of Kirkstone; after which, for three long miles, all riding in a cart drawn by one horse becomes impossible. The ascent is computed at three miles, but is, probably, a little more. In some parts it is almost frightfully steep; for the road being only the original mountain track of shepherds, gradually widened and improved from age to age, (especially since the era of tourists began,) is carried over ground which no engineer, even in alpine countries, would have viewed as practicable. In ascending, this is felt chiefly as an obstruction and not as a peril, unless where there is a risk of the horses backing; but in the reverse order, some of these precipitous descents are terrific: and yet, once in utter darkness, after midnight, and the darkness irradiated only by continual streams of lightning, I was driven down this whole descent, at a full gallop, by a young woman — the carriage being a light one, the horses frightened, and the descents, at some critical parts of the road, so literally like the sides of a house, that it was difficult to keep the fore wheels from pressing upon the hind legs of the horses. Indeed, this is only according to the custom of the country, as I have before mentioned. The innkeeper of Ambleside, or Low-wood, will not mount this formidable hill without four horses. The leaders you are not required to take beyond the first three miles; but, of course, they are glad if you will take them on the whole stage of nine miles, to Patterdale; and, in that case, there is a real luxury at hand for those who enjoy velocity of motion. The descent

into Patterdale is much above two miles; but such is the propensity for flying down hills in Westmoreland, that I have found the descent accomplished in about six minutes, which is at the rate of eighteen miles an hour; the various turnings of the road making the speed much more sensible to the traveller. The pass, at the summit of this ascent, is nothing to be compared in sublimity with the pass under Great Gavil from Wastdalehead; but it is solemn, and profoundly impressive. At a height so awful as this, it may be easily supposed that all human dwellings have been long left behind: no sound of human life, no bells of churches or chapels ever ascend so far. And, as is noticed in Wordsworth's fine stanzas upon this memorable pass, the only sound that, even in noonday, disturbs the sleep of the weary pedestrian, is that of the bee murmuring amongst the mountain flowers — a sound as ancient

'As man's imperial front, and woman's roseate bloom.'

This way, and (which, to the sentiment of the case, is an important point) this way, of *necessity* and *inevitably*, passed the Roman legions; for it is a mathematic impossibility that any other route could be found for an army nearer to the eastward of this pass than by way of Kendal and Shap; nearer to the westward, than by way of Legbesthwaite and St. John's Vale, (and so by Threlkeld to Penrith.) Now, these two roads are exactly twenty-five miles apart; and, since a Roman cohort was stationed at Ambleside, (*Amboglana*,) it is pretty evident that this cohort would not correspond with the more northerly stations by either of these remote routes — having immediately before it this direct though difficult pass to Kirkstone. On the solitary area of table-land which you find at the summit — though, Heaven knows, you might almost cover it with a drawing-room carpet,

so suddenly does the mountain take to its old trick of precipitous descent, on both sides alike — there are only two objects to remind you of man and his workmanship. One is a guide-post — always a picturesque and interesting object, because it expresses a wild country and a labyrinth of roads, and often made much more interesting (as in this case) by the lichens which cover it, and which record the generations of men to whom it has done its office; as also by the crucifix form which inevitably recall, in all mountainous regions, the crosses of Catholic lands, raised to the memory of wayfaring men who have perished by the hand of the assassin.

The other memorial of man is even more interesting: — Amongst the fragments of rock which lie in the confusion of a ruin on each side of the road, one there is, which exceeds the rest in height, and which, in shape, presents a very close resemblance to a church. This lies to the left of the road as you are going from Ambleside; and, from its name, Churchstone, (Kirkstone,) is derived the name of the pass, and from the pass the name of the mountain. The guide-post — which was really the work of man — tells those going southwards (for to those who go northwards it is useless, since, in that direction, there is no choice of roads) that the left hand track conducts you to Troutbeck, and Bowness, and Kendal; the right hand to Ambleside, and Hawkshead, and Ulverstone. The church — which is but a phantom of man's handiwork — might, however, really be mistaken for such, were it not that the rude and almost inaccessible state of the adjacent ground proclaims the truth. As to size, *that* is remarkably difficult to estimate upon wild heaths or mountain solitudes, where there are no leadings through gradations of distance, nor any artificial standards, from which height or breadth can be properly deduced. This

mimic church, however, has a peculiarly fine effect in this wild situation, which leaves so far below the tumults of this world: the phantom church, by suggesting the phantom and evanescent image of a congregation, where never congregation met; of the pealing organ, where never sound was heard except of wild natural notes, or else of the wind rushing through these mighty gates of everlasting rock — in this way, the fanciful image that accompanies the traveller on his road, for a half a mile or more, serves to bring out the antagonist feeling of intense and awful solitude, which is the natural and presiding sentiment — the *religio loci* — that broods for ever over the romantic pass.

Having walked up Kirkstone, we ascended our cart again; then rapidly descended to Brothers' Water — a lake which lies immediately below; and, about three miles further, through endless woods and under the shade of mighty fells, immediate dependencies and processes of the still more mighty Helvellyn, we approached the vale of Patterdale, when, by moonlight, we reached the inn. Here we found horses — by whom furnished I never asked nor heard; perhaps I owe somebody for a horse to this day. All I remember is — that through those most romantic woods and rocks of Stybarren — through those silent glens of Glencoin and Glenridding — through that most romantic of parks then belonging to the Duke of Norfolk, viz. Gobarrow Park — we saw alternately, for four miles, the most grotesque and the most awful spectacles —

> 'Abbey windows
> And Moorish temples of the Hindoos,'

all fantastic, all as unreal and shadowy as the moonlight which created them; whilst, at every angle of the road, broad gleams came upwards of Ulleswater, stretching for

nine miles northward, but, fortunately for its effect, broken into three watery chambers of almost equal length, and rarely visible at once. At the foot of the lake, in a house called Ewsmere, we passed the night, having accomplished about twenty-two miles only in our day's walking and riding. The next day Wordsworth and I, leaving at Ewsmere the rest of our party, spent the morning in roaming through the woods of Lowther, and, towards evening, we dined together at Emont Bridge, one mile short of Penrith. Afterwards, we walked into Penrith. There Wordsworth left me in excellent quarters — the house of Captain Wordsworth, from which the family happened to be absent. Whither he himself adjourned, I know not, nor on what business; however, it occupied him throughout the next day; and, therefore, I employed myself in sauntering along the road, about seventeen miles, to Keswick. There I had been directed to ask for Greta Hall, which, with some little difficulty, I found; for it stands out of the town a few hundred yards, upon a little eminence overhanging the river Greta. It was about seven o'clock when I reached Southey's door; for I had stopped to dine at a little public house in Threlkeld, and had walked slowly for the last two hours in the dark. The arrival of a stranger occasioned a little sensation in the house; and, by the time the front door could be opened, I saw Mrs. Coleridge, and a gentleman whom I could not doubt to be Southey, standing, very hospitably, to greet my entrance. Southey was, in person, somewhat taller than Wordsworth, being about five feet eleven in height, or a trifle more, whilst Wordsworth was about five feet ten; and, partly from having slender limbs, partly from being more symmetrically formed about the shoulders than Wordsworth, he struck one as a better and lighter figure, to the effect of which his dress con-

tributed; for he wore pretty constantly a short jacket and pantaloons, and had much the air of a Tyrolese mountaineer.

On the next day arrived Wordsworth. I could read at once, in the manner of the two authors, that they were not on particularly friendly, or rather, I should say, confidential terms. It seemed to me as if both had silently said — we are too much men of sense to quarrel, because we do not happen particularly to like each other's writings: we are neighbors, or what passes for such in the country. Let us show each other the courtesies which are becoming to men of letters; and, for any closer connection, our distance of thirteen miles may be always sufficient to keep us from *that*. In after life, it is true — fifteen years, perhaps, from this time — many circumstances combined to bring Southey and Wordsworth into more intimate terms of friendship: agreement in politics, sorrows which had happened to both alike in their domestic relations, and the sort of tolerance for different opinions in literature, or, indeed, in anything else, which advancing years and experience are sure to bring with them. But at this period, Southey and Wordsworth entertained a mutual esteem, but did not cordially like each other. Indeed, it would have been odd if they had. Wordsworth lived in the open air: Southey in his library, which Coleridge used to call his wife. Southey had particularly elegant habits (Wordsworth called them finical) in the use of books. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was so negligent, and so self-indulgent in the same case, that as Southey, laughing, expressed it to me some years afterwards, when I was staying at Greta Hall on a visit — 'To introduce Wordsworth into one's library, is like letting a bear into a tulip garden.' What I mean by self-indulgent is this: generally it happens that new books baffle and mock one's

curiosity by their uncut leaves; and the trial is pretty much the same, as when, in some town, where you are utterly unknown, you meet the postman at a distance from your inn, with some letter for yourself from a dear, dear friend in foreign regions, without money to pay the postage. How is it with you, dear reader, in such a case? Are you not tempted (*I am* grievously) to snatch the letter from his tantalizing hand, spite of the roar which you anticipate of 'Stop thief!' and make off as fast as you can for some solitary street in the suburbs, where you may instantly effect an entrance upon your new estate before the purchase money is paid down? Such were Wordsworth's feelings in regard to new books; of which the first exemplification I had was early in my acquaintance with him, and on occasion of a book which (if any could) justified the too summary style of his advances in rifling its charms. On a level with the eye, when sitting at the tea-table in my little cottage at Grasmere, stood the collective works of Edmund Burke. The book was to me an eye-sore and an ear-sore for many a year, in consequence of the cacophonous title lettered by the bookseller upon the back — 'Burke's Works.' I have heard it said, by the way, that Donne's intolerable defect of ear, grew out of his own baptismal name, when harnessed to his own surname — *John Donne*. No man, it was said, who had listened to this hideous jingle from childish years, could fail to have his genius for discord, and the abominable in sound, improved to the utmost. Not less dreadful than *John Donne* was 'Burke's Works;' which, however, on the old principle, that every day's work is no day's work, continued to annoy me for twenty-one years. Wordsworth took down the volume; unfortunately it was uncut; fortunately, and by a special Providence as to him, it seemed, tea was proceeding at the time. Dry

toast required butter; butter required knives; and knives then lay on the table; but sad it was for the virgin purity of Mr. Burke's as yet unsunned pages, that every knife bore upon its blade testimonies of the service it had rendered. Did *that* stop Wordsworth? Did that cause him to call for another knife? Not at all; he

> 'Look'd at the knife that caus'd his pain:
> And look'd and sigh'd, and look'd and sigh'd again;'

and then, after this momentary tribute to regret, he tore his way into the heart of the volume with this knife, that left its greasy honors behind it upon every page: and are they not there to this day? This personal experience just brought me acquainted with Wordsworth's habits, and that particular, especially, with his intense impatience for one minute's delay, which would have brought a remedy; and yet the reader may believe that it is no affectation in me to say, that fifty such cases could have given me but little pain, when I explain, that whatever could be made good by money, at that time, I did not regard. Had the book been an old black-letter book, having a value from its rarity, I should have been disturbed in an indescribable degree; but simply with reference to the utter impossibility of reproducing that mode of value. As to the Burke, it was a common book; I had bought the book, with many others, at the sale of Sir Cecil Wray's library, for about two-thirds of the selling price: I could easily replace it; and I mention the case at all, only to illustrate the excess of Wordsworth's outrages on books, which made him, in Southey's eyes, a mere monster; for Southey's beautiful library was his estate; and this difference of habits would alone have sufficed to alienate him from Wordsworth. And so I argued in other cases of the same nature.

Meantime, had Wordsworth done as Coleridge did, how cheerfully should I have acquiesced in his destruction (such as it was, in a pecuniary sense,) of books, as the very highest obligation he could confer. Coleridge often spoiled a book; but, in the course of doing this, he enriched that book with so many and so valuable notes, tossing about him, with such lavish profusion, from such a cornucopia of discursive reading, and such a fusing intellect, commentaries, so many-angled and so many-colored, that I have envied many a man whose luck has placed him in the way of such injuries; and that man must have been a churl (though, God knows! too often this churl *has* existed) who could have found in his heart to complain. But Wordsworth rarely, indeed, wrote on the margin of books; and, when he did, nothing could less illustrate his intellectual superiority. The comments were such as might have been made by anybody. Once, I remember, before I had ever seen Wordsworth — probably a year before — I met a person who had once enjoyed the signal honor of travelling with him to London. It was in a stage-coach. But the person in question well knew *who* it was that had been his *compagnon de voyage*. Immediately he was glorified in my eyes. 'And,' said I, to this glorified gentleman, (who, *par parenthèse*, was also a donkey,) 'now, as you travelled nearly three hundred miles in the company of Mr. Wordsworth, consequently, (for this was in 1805,) during two nights and two days, doubtless you must have heard many profound remarks that would inevitably fall from his lips.' Nay, Coleridge had also been of the party; and, if Wordsworth *solus* could have been dull, was it within human possibilities that these *gemini* should have been so? 'Was it possible?' I said; and, perhaps, my donkey, who looked like one that had been immoderately threatened, at last

took courage; his eye brightened; and he intimated that he *did* remember something that Wordsworth had said — an 'observe,' as the Scotch call it.

'Ay, indeed; and what was it now? What did the great man say?'

'Why, sir, in fact, and to make a long story short, on coming near to London, we breakfasted at Baldock — you know Baldock? It's in Hertfordshire. Well, now, sir, would you believe it, though we were quite in regular time, the breakfast was precisely good for nothing?'

'And Wordsworth?'

'He observed' ——

'What did he observe?'

'That the buttered toast looked, for all the world, as if it had been soaked in hot water.'

Ye heavens! '*buttered toast!*' And was it *this* I waited for? Now, thought I, had Henry Mackenzie been breakfasting with Wordsworth, at Baldock, (and, strange enough! in years to come I *did* breakfast with Henry Mackenzie, for the solitary time I ever met him, and at Wordsworth's house, in Rydal,) he would have carried off one sole reminiscence from the meeting — namely, a confirmation of his creed, that we English are all dedicated, from our very cradle, to the luxuries of the palate, and peculiarly to this.* *Proh pudor!* Yet, in sad sin-

* It is not known to the English, but it is a fact which I can vouch for, from my six or seven years' residence in Scotland, that the Scotch, one and all, believe it to be an inalienable characteristic of an Englishman to be fond of good eating. What indignation have I, and how many a time, had occasion to feel and utter on this subject? But of this at some other time. Meantime, the Man of Feeling had this creed in excess; and, in some paper, (of *The Mirror* or *The Lounger*,) he describes an English tourist in Scotland by saying — I would not wish to be thought national; yet, in mere reverence for truth, I am bound to say, and to declare to all the world, (let who

terity, Wordsworth's pencil-notices in books were quite as disappointing. In Roderick Random, for example, I found a note upon a certain luscious description, to the effect 'that such things should be left to the imagination of the reader — not expressed.' In another place, that it was 'improper;' and, in a third, 'that the principle laid down was doubtful;' or, as Sir Roger de Coverley observes, 'that much might be said on both sides.' All this, however, indicates nothing more than that different men require to be roused by different stimulants. Wordsworth, in his marginal notes, thought of nothing but delivering himself of a strong feeling, with which he wished to challenge the reader's sympathy. Coleridge imagined an audience before him; and, however doubtful that consummation might seem, I am satisfied that he never wrote a line for which he did not feel the momentary inspiration of sympathy and applause, under the confidence, that, sooner or later, all which he had committed to the chance margins of books would converge and assemble in some common reservoir of reception. Bread scattered upon the water will be gathered after many days. This, perhaps, was the consolation that supported him; and the prospect that, for a time, his Arethusa of truth would flow underground, did not, perhaps, disturb, but rather cheered and elevated the sublime old somnabulist.*

Meantime, Wordsworth's habits of using books — which,

will be offended,) that the first innkeeper in Scotland, under whose roof we met with genuine buttered toast, was an Englishman.'

* Meantime, if it did not disturb *him*, it ought to disturb *us*, his immediate successors, who are at once the most likely to retrieve these *osses* by direct efforts, and the least likely to benefit by any casual or indirect retrievals, such as will be produced by time. Surely a subscription should be set on foot to recover all books enriched by his marginal notes. I would subscribe; and I know others who would largely.

I am satisfied, would, in those days, alone have kept him at a distance from most men with fine libraries — were not vulgar; not the habits of those who turn over the page by means of a wet finger, (though even this abomination I have seen perpetrated by a Cambridge tutor and fellow of a college; but then he had been bred up as a ploughman, and the son of a ploughman;) no; but his habits were more properly barbarous and licentious, and in the spirit of audacity belonging *de jure* to no man but him who could plead an income of four or five hundred thousand per annum, and to whom the Bodleian or the Vatican would be a three years' purchase. Gross, meantime, was his delusion upon this subject. Himself he regarded as the golden mean between the too little and the too much of care for books; and, as it happened that every one of his friends far exceeded him in this point, curiously felicitous was the explanation which he gave of this superfluous care, so as to bring it within the natural operation of some known fact in the man's peculiar situation. Southey (he was by nature something of an old bachelor) had his house filled with pretty articles — *bijouterie*, and so forth; and, naturally, he wished his books to be kept up to the same level — burnished and bright for show. Sir George Beaumont — this peculiarly elegant and accomplished man — was an old and most affectionate friend of Wordsworth's. Sir George Beaumont never had any children; if he had been so blessed, they, by familiarizing him with the spectacle of books ill used — stained, torn, mutilated, &c. — would have lowered the standard of his requisitions. The short solution of the whole case was — and it illustrated the nature of his education — he had never lived in a regular family at a time when habits are moulded. From boyhood to manhood he had been *sui juris*.

Returning to Southey and Greta Hall, both the house and the master may deserve a few words more of description. For the master, I have already sketched his person; and his face I profess myself unable to describe accurately. His hair was black, and yet his complexion was fair; his eyes I believe to be hazel and large; but I will not vouch for that fact: his nose aquiline; and he has a remarkable habit of looking up into the air, as if looking at abstractions. The expression of his face was that of a very acute and an aspiring man. So far, it was even noble, as it conveyed a feeling of a serene and gentle pride, habitually familiar with elevating subjects of contemplation. And yet it was impossible that this pride could have been offensive to anybody, chastened as it was by the most unaffected modesty; and this modesty made evident and prominent by the constant expression of reverence for the great men of the age, (when he happened to esteem them such,) and for all the great patriarchs of our literature. The point in which Southey's manner failed the most in conciliating regard, was, in all which related to the external expressions of friendliness. No man could be more sincerely hospitable — no man more essentially disposed to give up even his time (the possession which he most valued) to the service of his friends. But there was an air of reserve and distance about him — the reserve of a lofty, self-respecting mind, but, perhaps, a little too freezing — in his treatment of all persons who were not among the *corps* of his ancient fireside friends. Still, even towards the veriest strangers, it is but justice to notice his extreme courtesy in sacrificing his literary employments for the day, whatever they might be, to the duty (for such he made it) of doing the honors of the lake, and the adjacent mountains.

Southey was at that time, (1807,) and has continued

ever since, the most industrious of all literary men on record. A certain task he prescribed to himself every morning before breakfast. This could not be a very long one, for he breakfasted at nine, or soon after, and *never* rose before eight, though he went to bed duly at half-past ten; but, as I have many times heard him say, less than nine hours' sleep he found insufficient. From breakfast to a latish dinner (about half after five or six) was his main period of literary toil. After dinner, according to the accident of having or not having visitors in the house, he sat over his wine; or he retired to his library again, from which, about eight, he was summoned to tea. But, generally speaking, he closed his *literary* toils at dinner; the whole of the hours after that meal being dedicated to his correspondence. This, it may be supposed, was unusually large, to occupy so much of his time, for his letters rarely extended to any length. At that period, the post, by way of Penrith, reached Keswick about six or seven in the evening. And so pointedly regular was Southey in all his habits, that, short as the time was, all letters were answered on the same evening which brought them. At tea, he read the London papers. It was perfectly astonishing to men of less methodical habits, to find how much he got through of elaborate business by his unvarying system of arrangement in the distribution of his time. We often hear it said, in accounts of pattern ladies and gentlemen, (what Coleridge used contemptuously to style *goody* people,) that they found time for everything; that business never interrupted pleasure; that labors of love and charity never stood in the way of courtesy and personal enjoyment. This is easy to say — easy to put down as one feature of an imaginary portrait: but I must say, that, in actual life, I have seen few such cases. Southey, however, *did* find time for everything.

It moved the sneers of some people, that even his poetry was composed according to a predetermined rule; that so many lines should be produced, by contract, as it were, before breakfast; so many at such another definite interval. And I acknowledge, that, so far, I went along with the sneerers, as to marvel exceedingly how that *could* be possible. But, if *à priori*, one laughed and expected to see verses corresponding to this mechanic rule of construction, *à posteriori* one was bound to judge of the verses as one found them. Supposing them good, they were entitled to honor, no matter for the previous reasons which made it possible that they would *not* be good. And generally, however undoubtedly they *ought* to have been bad, the world has pronounced them good. In fact, they *are* good; and the sole objection to them is, that they are too intensely *objective* — too much reflect the mind, as spreading itself out upon external things — too little exhibit the mind, as introverting itself upon its own thoughts and feelings. This, however, is an objection, which only seems to limit the range of the poetry — and all poetry *is* limited in its range: none comprehends more than a section of the human power. Meantime, the prose of Southey was that by which he lived. *The Quarterly Review* it was by which, as he expressed it to myself in 1810, he '*made the pot boil.*'

About the same time, possibly as early as 1808, (for I think that I remember in that Journal an account of the Battle of Vimiera,) Southey was engaged by an Edinburgh publisher, [Constable, was it not?] to write the entire historical part of *The Edinburgh Annual Register*, at a salary of £400 per annum. Afterwards, the publisher, who was intensely national, and, doubtless, never from the first cordially relished the notion of importing English aid into a city teeming with briefless barristers

and variety of talent, threw out a hint that perhaps he might reduce the salary to £300. Just about this time I happened to see Southey, who said laughingly — 'If the man of Edinburgh does this, I shall *strike* for an advance of wages.' I presume that he *did* strike, and, like many other 'operatives,' without effect. Those who work for lower wages during a strike are called *snobs*,* the men who stand out being *nobs*. Southey became a resolute nob; but some snob was found in Edinburgh, some youthful advocate, who accepted £300 per annum, and thenceforward Southey lost this part of his income. I once possessed the whole work: and in one part, viz. *The Domestic Chronicle*, I know that it is executed with a most culpable carelessness — the beginnings of cases being given without the ends, the ends without the beginnings — a defect but too common in public journals. The credit of the work, however, was staked upon its treatment of the current public history of Europe, and the tone of its politics in times so full of agitation, and teeming with new births in every year, some fated to prove abortive, but others bearing golden promises for the human race. Now, whatever might be the talent with which Southey's successor performed his duty, there was a loss in one point for which no talent of mere execution could make amends. The very prejudices of Southey tended to unity of feeling: they were in harmony with each other, and grew out of a strong moral feeling, which is the one sole secret for giving interest to an historical narration, fusing the incoherent details into one body, and carrying the reader fluently along the else monotonous recurrences and unmeaning details of military movements. Well or ill directed, a strong moral feeling, and a profound sympathy

* See the Evidence before the House of Commons' Committee.

with elementary justice, is that which creates a soul under what else may well be denominated, Miltonically, 'the ribs of death.'

Now this, and a mind already made up even to obstinacy upon all public questions, were the peculiar qualifications which Southey brought to the task — qualifications not to be bought in any market, not to be compensated by any amount of mere intellectual talent, and almost impossible as the qualifications of a much younger man. As a pecuniary loss, though considerable, Southey was not unable to support it; for he had a pension from Governmen before this time, and under the following circumstances: — Charles Wynne, the brother of Sir Watkin, the great autocrat of North Wales — that C. W. who is almost equally well known for his knowledge of Parliamentary usage, which pointed him out to the notice of the House as an eligible person to fill the office of speaker, and for his unfortunately shrill voice, which chiefly it was that defeated his claim* — (in fact, as is universally known, his brother and he, for different defects of voice and utterance, are called *Bubble and Squeak*) — this C. W. had believed himself to have been deeply indebted to Southey's high-toned moral example, and to his wise counsels, during the time when both were students at Oxford, for the fortunate direction given to his own wavering impulses. This sense of obligation he endeavored to express, by settling a pension upon Southey from his own funds. At length, upon the death of Mr. Pitt, early in 1806, an opening was made for the Fox and Grenville parties to come into office.

* Sir Watkin, the elder brother, had a tongue too large for his mouth; Mr. C. Wynne, the younger, had a shrill voice, which at times rose into a scream. It became, therefore, a natural and current jest, to call the two brothers by the name of a well-known dish, viz. *bubble and squeak*.

Charles Wynne, as a person connected by marriage with the house of Grenville, and united with them in political opinions, shared in the golden shower; he also received a place; and, upon the strength of his improving prospects, he married: upon which it occurred to Southey, that it was no longer right to tax the funds of one who was now called upon to support an establishment becoming his rank. Under that impression he threw up his pension; and upon *their* part, to express their sense of what they considered a delicate and honorable sacrifice, the Grenvilles placed Southey upon the national pension list.

What might be the exact color of Southey's political creed in this year, 1807, it is difficult to say. The great revolution, in his way of thinking upon such subjects, with which he has been so often upbraided as something equal in delinquency to a deliberate tergiversation or moral apostasy, could not have then taken place; and of this I am sure, from the following little anecdote connected with this visit: — On the day after my own arrival at Greta Hall, came Wordsworth following upon my steps from Penrith. We dined and passed that evening with Mr. Southey. The next morning, after breakfast, previously to leaving Keswick, we were sitting in Southey's library; and he was discussing with Wordsworth the aspect of public affairs: for my part, I was far too diffident to take any part in such a conversation, for I had no opinions at all upon politics, nor any interest in public affairs, further than that I had a keen sympathy with the national honor, gloried in the name of Englishman, and had been bred up in a frenzied horror of jacobinism. Not having been old enough, at the first outbreak of the French Revolution, to participate (as else, undoubtedly, I should have done) in the golden hopes of its early dawn, my first youthful introduction to foreign politics had been

n seasons and circumstances that taught me to approve of all I heard in abhorrence of French excesses, and to worship the name of Pitt; otherwise my whole heart had been so steadily fixed on a different world from the world of our daily experience, that, for some years, I had never looked into a newspaper; nor, if I cared something for the movement made by nations from year to year, did I care one iota for their movement from week to week. Still, careless as I was on these subjects, it sounded as a novelty to me, and one which I had not dreamed of as a possibility, to hear men of education and liberal pursuits — men, besides, whom I regarded as so elevated in mind, and one of them as a person charmed and consecrated from error — giving utterance to sentiments which seemed absolutely disloyal. Yet now did I hear — and I heard with an emotion of sorrow, but a sorrow that instantly gave way to a conviction that it was myself who lay under a delusion, and simply because

——— 'from Abelard it came' —

opinions avowed most hostile to the reigning family; not personally to them, but generally to a monarchical form of government. And that I could not be mistaken in my impression, that my memory cannot have played me false, is evident, from one relic of the conversation which rested upon my ear, and has survived to this day — thirty and two years from the time.* It had been agreed, that no good was to be hoped for, as respected England, until the royal family should be expatriated; and Southey, jestingly considering to what country they could be exiled, with mutual benefit for that country and themselves, had supposed the case — that, with a large allowance of money,

* Thirty-two years, observe, at the time when these parts were written; but that time was at least fifteen years ago.

such as might stimulate beneficially the industry of a rising colony, they should be transported to New South Wales; which project, amusing his fancy, he had, with the readiness and facility that characterizes his mind, thrown *extempore* into verse; speaking off, as an improvisatore, about eight or ten lines, of which the three last I perfectly remember, and they were these, (by the way I should have mentioned, that they took the form of a petition addressed to the King:)—

> 'Therefore, old George, by George we pray
> Of thee forthwith to extend thy sway
> Over the great Botanic Bay.'

The sole doubt I have about the exact words regard the second line, which might have been (according to a various reading which equally clings to my ear)—

> 'That thou would'st please t' extend thy sway.'

But about the last I cannot be wrong; for I remember laughing with a sense of something peculiarly droll in the substitution of the stilted phrase—'*the great Botanic Bay*,' for our ordinary week-day name *Botany Bay*, so redolent of thieves and pickpockets.

Southey walked with us that morning for about five miles on our road towards Grasmere, which brought us to the southern side of Shoulthwaite Moss, and into the sweet solitary little vale of Legbesthwaite. And, by the way, he took leave of us at the gate of a house, one amongst the very few (five or six in all) just serving to redeem that valley from absolute solitude, which some years afterwards became, in a slight degree, remarkable to me from two little incidents by which it connected itself with my personal experiences. One was, perhaps, scarcely worth recording. It was simply this—that Wordsworth and myself having, through a long day's

rambling, alternately walked and rode with a friend of his who happened to have a travelling carriage with him, and who was on his way to Keswick, agreed to wait hereabouts until Wordsworth's friend, in his abundant kindness, should send back his carriage to take us, on our return to Grasmere, distant about eight miles. It was a lovely summer evening; but, as it happened that we ate our breakfast early, and had eaten nothing at all throughout a long summer's day, we agreed to 'sorn' upon the goodman of the house, whoever he might happen to be, Catholic or Protestant, Jew, Gentile, or Mahometan, and to take any bone that he would be pleased to toss to such hungry dogs as ourselves. Accordingly we repaired to his gate; we knocked, and, forthwith it was opened to us by a man-mountain, who listened benignantly to our humble request, and ushered us into a comfortable parlor. All sorts of refreshments he continued to shower upon us for a space of two hours: it became evident that our introducer was the master of the house: we adored him in our thoughts as an earthly providence to hungry wayfarers; and we longed to make his acquaintance. But, for some inexplicable reason, that must continue to puzzle all future commentators on Wordsworth and his history, he never made his appearance. Could it be, we thought, that, without the formality of a sign, he, in so solitary a region, more than twenty-five miles distant from Kendal, (the only town worthy of the name throughout the adjacent country,) exercised the functions of a landlord, and that we ought to pay him for his most liberal hospitality? Never was such a dilemma from the foundation of Legbesthwaite. To err, in either direction, was damnable: to go off without paying, if he *were* an innkeeper, made us swindlers; to offer payment if he were not, and supposing that he had been inundating us with his hospit-

able bounties, simply in the character of a natural-born gentleman, made us the most unfeeling of mercenary ruffians. In the latter case we might expect a duel; in the former, of course, the treadmill. We were deliberating on this sad alternative, and I, for my part was voting in favor of the treadmill, when the sound of wheels was heard, and, in one minute, the carriage of his friend drew up to the farmer's gate; the crisis had now arrived, and we perspired considerably; when in came the frank Cumberland lass who had been our attendant. To her we propounded our difficulty — and lucky it was we did so, for she assured us that her master was an awful man, and would have 'brained' us both if we had insulted him with the offer of money. She, however, honored us by accepting the price of some female ornament.

I made a memorandum at the time, to ascertain the peculiar taste of this worthy Cumberland farmer, in order that I might, at some future opportunity, express my thanks to him for his courtesy; but, alas! for human resolutions, I have not done so to this moment; and is it likely that he, perhaps sixty years old at that time, (1813,) is alive at present, twenty-five years removed? Well, he *may* be; though I think *that* exceedingly doubtful, considering the next anecdote relating to the same house: — Two, or, it may be, three years after this time, I was walking to Keswick, from my own cottage, in Grasmere. The distance was thirteen miles; the time just nine o'clock; the night a cloudy moonlight, and intensely cold. I took the very greatest delight in these nocturnal walks, through the silent valleys of Cumberland and Westmoreland; and often at hours far later than the present. What I liked in this solitary rambling was, to trace the course of the evening through its household hieroglyphics, from the windows which I passed or saw; to see the blazing fires shining

through the windows of houses, lurking in nooks far apart from neighbors; sometimes in solitudes that seemed abandoned to the owl, to catch the sounds of household mirth; then, some miles further, to perceive the time of going to bed; then the gradual sinking to silence of the house; then the drowsy reign of the cricket; at intervals, to hear church-clocks or a little solitary chapel-bell, under the brows of mighty hills, proclaiming the hours of the night, and flinging out their sullen knells over the graves where 'the rude forefathers of the hamlet slept' — where the strength and the loveliness of Elizabeth's time, or Cromwell's, and through so many fleeting generations that have succeeded, had long ago sunk to rest. Such was the sort of pleasure which I reaped in my nightly walks — of which, however, considering the suspicions of lunacy which it has sometimes awoke, the less I say, perhaps, the better. Nine o'clock it was — and deadly cold as ever March night was made by the keenest of black frosts, and by the bitterest of north winds — when I drew towards the gate of our huge and hospitable friend. A little garden there was before the house; and in the centre of this garden was placed an arm-chair, upon which arm-chair was sitting composedly — but I rubbed my eyes, doubting the very evidence of my own eyesight — *a* or *the* huge man in his shirt-sleeves; yes, positively not sunning but *mooning* himself — apricating himself in the occasional moonbeams; and, as if simple star-gazing from a sedentary station were not sufficient on such a night, absolutely pursuing his astrological studies, I repeat, in his shirt-sleeves! Could this be our hospitable friend, the man-mountain? Secondly, was it any man at all? Might it not be a scarecrow dressed up to frighten the birds? But from what — to frighten them from what at that season of the year? Yet, again, it might be an ancient scare-

crow — a superannuated scarecrow, far advanced in years. But, still, why should a scarecrow, young or old, sit in an arm-chair? Suppose I were to ask. Yet, where was the use of asking a scarecrow? And, if not a scarecrow, where was the safety of speaking too inquisitively, on his own premises, to a man-mountain? The old dilemma of the duel or the treadmill, if I should intrude upon his grounds at night, occurred to me; and I watched the anomalous object in silence for some minutes. At length the monster (for such at any rate it was, scarecrow or not scarecrow) solemnly raised his hand to his face, perhaps taking a pinch of snuff, and thereby settled one question. But that settled, only irritated my curiosity the more; upon a second, what hallucination of the brain was it that could induce a living man to adopt so very absurd a line of conduct? Once I thought of addressing him thus: — Might I presume so far upon your known courtesy to way-faring strangers, as to ask — Is it the Devil who prompts you to sit in your shirt-sleeves, as if meditating a *camisade*, or to woo *al fresco* pleasures on such a night as this? But as Dr. Y., on complaining that, whenever he looked out of the window, he was sure to see Mr. X. lounging about the quadrangle, was effectually parried by Mr. X. retorting — that, whenever he lounged in the quadrangle, he was sure to see the Doctor looking out of the window; so did I anticipate a puzzling rejoinder from the former, with regard to my own motives for haunting the roads as a nocturnal tramper, without a rational object that I could make intelligible. I thought, also, of the fate which attended the Calendars, and so many other notorious characters in the 'Arabian Nights,' for unseasonable questions, or curiosity too vivacious. And, upon the whole, I judged it advisable to pursue my journey in silence, considering the time of night, the solitary place, and the

fancy of our enormous friend for 'braining' those whom he regarded as ugly customers. And thus it came about that this one house has been loaded in my memory with a double mystery, that too probably never *can* be explained: and another torment had been prepared for the curious of future ages.

Of Southey, meantime, I had learned, upon this brief and hurried visit, so much in confirmation or in extension of my tolerably just preconceptions, with regard to his character and manners, as left me not a very great deal to add, and nothing at all to alter, through the many years which followed of occasional intercourse with his family, and domestic knowledge of his habits. A man of more serene and even temper, could not be imagined; nor more uniformly cheerful in his tone of spirits; nor more unaffectedly polite and courteous in his demeanor to strangers; nor more hospitable in his own wrong — I mean by the painful sacrifices, which hospitality entailed upon him, of time, so exceedingly precious that, during his winter and spring months of solitude, or whenever he was left absolute master of its distribution, every half hour in the day had its peculiar duty. In the still 'weightier matters of the law,' in cases that involved appeals to conscience and high moral principle, I believe Southey to be as exemplary a man as can ever have lived. Were it to his own instant ruin, I am satisfied that he would do justice and fulfil his duty under any possible difficulties, and through the very strongest temptations to do otherwise. For honor the most delicate, for integrity the firmest, and for generosity within the limits of prudence, Southey cannot well have a superior; and, in the lesser moralities — those which govern the daily habits, and transpire through the manners — he is certainly a better man — that is, (with reference

to the minor principle concerned,) a more *amiable* man — than Wordsworth. He is less capable, for instance, of usurping an undue share of the conversation; he is more uniformly disposed to be charitable in his transient colloquial judgments upon doubtful actions of his neighbors; more gentle and winning in his condescensions to inferior knowledge or powers of mind; more willing to suppose it possible that he himself may have fallen into an error; more tolerant of avowed indifference towards his own writings, (though by the way, I shall have something to offer in justification of Wordsworth, upon this charge;) and, finally, if the reader will pardon a violent instance of anti-climax, much more ready to volunteer his assistance in carrying a lady's reticule or parasol.

As a more *amiable* man, (taking that word partly in the French sense, partly also in the loftier English sense,) it might be imagined that Southey would be a more eligible companion than Wordsworth. But this is not so; and chiefly for three reasons which more than counterbalance Southey's greater amiability; *first*, because the natural reserve of Southey, which I have mentioned before, makes it peculiarly difficult to place yourself on terms of intimacy with him; *secondly*, because the range of his conversation is more limited than that of Wordsworth — dealing less with life and the interests of life — more exclusively with books; *thirdly*, because the style of his conversation is less flowing and diffusive — less expansive — more apt to clothe itself in a keen, sparkling, aphoristic form — consequently much sooner and more frequently coming to an abrupt close. A sententious, epigrammatic form of delivering opinions has a certain effect of *clenching* a subject, which makes it difficult to pursue it without a corresponding smartness of expression, and something

of the same antithetic point and equilibration of clauses Not that the reader is to suppose in Southey a showy master of rhetoric and colloquial sword-play, seeking to strike and to dazzle by his brilliant hits or adroit evasions. The very opposite is the truth. He seeks, indeed, to be effective, not for the sake of display, but as the readiest means of retreating from display, and the necessity for display: feeling that his station in literature and his laurelled honors make him a mark for the curiosity and interest of the company — that a standing appeal is constantly turning to him for his opinion — a latent call always going on for his voice on the question of the moment — he is anxious to comply with this requisition at as slight a cost as may be of thought and time. His heart is continually reverting to his wife, viz. his library; and that he may waste as little effort as possible upon his conversational exercises — that the little he wishes to say may appear pregnant with much meaning — he finds it advantageous, and, moreover, the style of his mind naturally prompts him, to adopt a trenchant, pungent, aculeated form of terse, glittering, stenographic sentences — sayings which have the air of laying down the law without any *locus penitentiæ* or privilege of appeal, but are not meant to do so; in short, aiming at brevity for the company as well as for himself, by cutting off all opening for discussion and desultory talk, through the sudden winding up that belongs to a sententious aphorism. The hearer feels that 'the record is closed;' and he has a sense of this result as having been accomplished by something like an oracular laying down of the law *ex cathedra:* but this is an indirect collateral impression from Southey's manner, and far from the one he meditates or wishes. An oracular manner he does certainly affect in certain dilemmas of a languishing or loitering conversation; not the peremptoriness, mean-

time, not the imperiousness of the oracle is what he seeks for, but its brevity, its dispatch, its conclusiveness.

Finally, as a fourth reason why Southey is less fitted for a genial companion than Wordsworth, his spirits have been, of late years, in a lower key than those of the latter. The tone of Southey's animal spirits was never at any time raised beyond the standard of an ordinary sympathy; there was in him no tumult, no agitation of passion; his organic and constitutional sensibilities were healthy, sound, perhaps strong — but not profound, not excessive. Cheerful he was, and animated at all times; but he levied no tributes on the spirits or the feelings beyond what all people could furnish. One reason why his bodily temperament never, like that of Wordsworth, threw him into a state of tumultuous excitement, which required intense and elaborate conversation to work off the excessive fervor, was, that, over and above his far less fervid constitution of mind and body, Southey rarely took any exercise; he led a life as sedentary, except for the occasional excursions in summer, (extorted from his sense of kindness and hospitality,) as that of a city tailor. And it was surprising to many people, who did not know by experience the prodigious effect upon the mere bodily health of regular and congenial mental labor, that Southey should be able to maintain health so regular, and cheerfulness so uniformly serene. Cheerful, however, he was, in those early years of my acquaintance with him; but it was manifest to a thoughtful observer, that his golden equanimity was bound up in a threefold chain, in a conscience clear of all offence, in the recurring enjoyments from his honorable industry, and in the gratification of his parental affections. If any one chord should give way, there (it seemed) would be an end to Southey's tranquillity. He had a son at that time,

Herbert * Southey, a child in petticoats when I first knew him, very interesting even then, but annually putting forth fresh blossoms of unusual promise, that made even indifferent people fear for the safety of one so finely organized, so delicate in his sensibilities, and so prematurely accomplished. As to his father, it became evident, that he lived almost in the light of young Herbert's smiles, and that the very pulses of his heart played in unison to the sound of his son's laughter. There was in his manner towards this child, and towards this only, something that marked an excess of delirious doating, perfectly unlike the ordinary chastened movements of Southey's affections; and something also, which indicated a vague fear about him; a premature unhappiness, as if already the inaudible tread of calamity could be perceived, as if already he had lost him; which, for the latter years of the boy's life, seemed to poison the blessing of his presence.

A stronger evidence I cannot give of Southey's trembling apprehensiveness about this child, than that the only rude thing I ever knew him to do, the only discourteous

* Why he was called Herbert, if my young readers inquire, I must reply, that I do not precisely know; because I know of reasons too many by half why he might have been so called. Derwent Coleridge, the second son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and first cousin of Herbert Southey, was so called from the Lake of Keswick, commonly styled Derwent Water, which gave the title of Earl to the noble and the noble-minded, though erring family of the Radcliffes, who gave up, like heroes and martyrs, their lives and the finest estates in England, for one who was incapable of appreciating the service. One of the islands on this lake is dedicated to St Herbert, and this *might* have given a name to Southey's first-born child. But it is more probable, that he derived this name from Dr. Herbert, uncle to the laureate.

thing, was done on his account. A party of us, chiefly composed of Southey's family and his visitors, were in a sailboat upon the lake. Herbert was one of this party; and at that time not above five or six years old. In landing upon one of the islands, most of the gentlemen were occupied in assisting the ladies over the thwarts of the boat; and one gentleman, merely a stranger, observing this, good-naturedly took up Herbert in his arms, and was stepping with him most carefully from thwart to thwart, when Southey, in a perfect frenzy of anxiety for his boy, his 'moon' as he used to call him, (I suppose from some pun of his own, or some mistake of the child's upon the equivocal word *sun*,) rushed forward, and tore him out of the arms of the stranger without one word of apology; nor, in fact, under the engrossing panic of the moment, lest an unsteady movement along with the rocking and undulating of the boat should throw his little boy overboard into the somewhat stormy waters of the lake, did Southey become aware of his own exceedingly discourteous action — fear for his boy quelled his very power of perception. That the stranger, on reflection, understood, a race of emotions travelled over his countenance. I saw the whole, a silent observer from the shore. First a hasty blush of resentment mingled with astonishment: then a good-natured smile of indulgence to the *naïveté* of the paternal feeling as displaying itself in the act, and the accompanying gestures of frenzied impatience; finally, a considerate, grave expression of acquiescence in the whole act; but with a pitying look towards father and son, as too probably destined under such agony of affection to trials perhaps insupportable. If I interpreted aright the stranger's feelings, he did not read their destinies amiss. Herbert became, with his growing

years, a child of more and more hope; but, therefore, the object of more and more fearful solicitude. He read, and read; and he became at last

'A very learned youth' —

to borrow a line from his uncle's beautiful poem on the wild boy, who fell into a heresy, whilst living under the patronage of a Spanish grandee, and, finally, escaped from a probable martyrdom, by sailing up a great American river wide as any sea, after which he was never heard of again. The learned youth of the river Greta had an earlier and more sorrowful close to his career. Possibly from want of exercise, combined with inordinate exercise of the cerebral organs, a disease gradually developed itself in the heart. It was not a mere disorder in the functions, it was a disease in the structure of the organ, and admitted of no permanent relief, consequently of no final hope. He died; and with him died for ever the golden hopes, the radiant felicity, and the internal serenity, of the unhappy father. It was from Southey himself, speaking without external signs of agitation, calmly, dispassionately, almost coldly, but with the coldness of a settled despondency, that I heard, whilst accompanying him through Grasmere on his road homewards to Keswick, from some visit he had been paying to Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, his settled feelings and convictions as connected with that loss; for him, in this world, he said, happiness there could be none; for that his tenderest affections, the very deepest by many degrees which he had ever known, were now buried in the grave with his youthful and too brilliant Herbert.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOUTHEY, WORDSWORTH, AND COLERIDGE.

A CIRCUMSTANCE which, as much as anything, expounded to every eye the characteristic distinctions between Wordsworth and Southey, and would not suffer a stranger to forget it for a moment, was the insignificant place and consideration allowed to the small book-collection of the former, contrasted with the splendid library of the latter. The two or three hundred volumes of Wordsworth occupied a little, homely, painted book-case, fixed into one of two shallow recesses, formed on each side of the fireplace by the projection of the chimney in the little sitting-room up stairs, which he had already described as his half kitchen and half parlor. They were ill bound, or not bound at all—in boards, sometimes in tatters; many were imperfect as to the number of volumes, mutilated as to the number of pages; sometimes, where it seemed worth while, the defects being supplied by manuscript; sometimes not: in short, everything showed that the books were for use, and not for show; and their limited amount showed that their possessor must have independent sources of enjoyment to fill up the major part of his time. In reality, when the weather was tolerable, I believe that Wordsworth rarely resorted to his books, (unless, perhaps, to some little pocket edition of a poet, which accompanied him in his rambles,) except in the evenings, or after he had tired himself by walking. On the other hand,

Southey's collection occupied a separate room, the largest, and, every way, the most agreeable in the house; and this room was styled, and not ostentatiously, (for it really merited that name,) the library. The house itself, Greta Hall, stood upon a little eminence, (as I have before mentioned,) overhanging the river Greta. There was nothing remarkable in its internal arrangements; in all respects it was a very plain, unadorned family dwelling; large enough, by a little contrivance, to accommodate two, or, in some sense, three families, viz. Mr. Southey, and *his* family; Mr. Coleridge and *his;* together with Mrs. Lovell, who, when her son was with her, might be said to compose a third. Mrs. Coleridge, Mrs. Southey, and Mrs. Lovell, were sisters; all having come originally from Bristol; and, as the different sets of children in this one house had each three several aunts, all the ladies, by turns, assuming that relation twice over, it was one of Southey's many amusing jests, to call the hill on which Greta Hall was placed, the *ant-hill.* Mrs. Lovell was the widow of Mr. Robert Lovell, who had published a volume of poems, in conjunction with Southey, somewhere about the year 1797, under the signatures of Bion and Moschus. This lady, having one only son, did not require any large suite of rooms; and the less so, as her son quitted her at an early age, to pursue a professional education. The house had, therefore, been divided (not by absolute partition into two distinct * apartments, but by an amicable distribution

* '*Into two distinct apartments.*' — The word apartment, meaning, in effect, a compartment of a house, already includes, in its proper sense, a suite of rooms; and it is a mere vulgar error, arising out of the ambitious usage of lodging-house keepers, to talk of one family or an establishment occupying apartments, in the plural. The Queen's apartment at St. James's or at Versailles — not the Queen's apartments — is the correct expression.

of rooms) between the two families of Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Southey; Mr. Coleridge had a separate study, which was distinguished by nothing except by an organ amongst its furniture, and by a magnificent view from its window, (or windows,) if that could be considered a distinction, in a situation whose local necessities presented you with magnificent objects in whatever direction you might happen to turn your eyes.

In the morning, the two families might live apart; but they met at dinner, and in a common drawing-room; and Southey's library, in both senses of the word, was placed at the service of all the ladies alike. However, they did not intrude upon him, except in cases where they wished for a larger reception room, or a more interesting place for suggesting the topics of conversation. Interesting this room was, indeed, and in a degree not often rivalled. The library — the collection of books, I mean, which formed the most conspicuous part of its furniture within — was in all senses a good one. The books were chiefly English, Spanish, and Portuguese; well selected, being the great cardinal classics of the three literatures; fine copies, and decorated externally with a reasonable elegance, so as to make them in harmony with the other embellishments of the room. This effect was aided by the horizontal arrangement upon brackets, of many rare manuscripts — Spanish or Portuguese. Made thus gay within, this room stood in little need of attractions from without. Yet, even upon the gloomiest day of winter, the landscape from the different windows was too permanently commanding in its grandeur, too essentially independent of the seasons or the pomp of woods, to fail in fascinating the gaze of the coldest and dullest of spectators. The lake of Derwent Water in one direction, with its lovely islands — a lake about ten miles in circuit, and shaped pretty much like a boy's kite;

.he lake of Bassinthwaite in another; the mountains of Newlands arranging themselves like pavilions; the gorgeous confusion of Borrowdale just revealing its sublime chaos through the narrow vista of its gorge; all these objects lay in different angles to the front; whilst the sullen rear, not fully visible on this side of the house, was closed for many a league by the vast and towering masses of Skiddaw and Blencathara — mountains which are rather to be considered as frontier barriers, and chains of hilly ground, cutting the county of Cumberland into great chambers and different climates, than as insulated eminences, so vast is the area which they occupy; though there *are* also such separate and insulated heights, and nearly amongst the highest in the country. Southey's lot had therefore fallen, locally considered, into a goodly heritage. This grand panorama of mountain scenery, so varied, so expansive, and yet having the delightful feeling about it of a deep seclusion and dell-like sequestration from the world — a feeling which, in the midst of so expansive an area, spread out below his windows, could not have been sustained by any barriers less elevated than Glaramara, Skiddaw, or (which could be also descried) 'the mighty Helvellyn and Catchedicam;' this congregation of hill and lake, so wide, and yet so prison-like, in its separation from all beyond it, lay for ever under the eyes of Southey. His position locally, and, in some respects, intellectually, reminded one of Gibbon: but with great advantage in the comparison to Southey. The little town of Keswick and its adjacent lake bore something of the same relation to mighty London that Geneva and its lake may be thought to bear towards brilliant Paris. Southey, like Gibbon, was a miscellaneous scholar; he, like Gibbon, of vast historical research; he, like Gibbon, signally ndustrious, and patient, and elaborate in collecting the

materials for his historical works. Like Gibbon, he had dedicated a life of competent ease, in a pecuniary sense, to literature; like Gibbon, he had gathered to the shores of a beautiful lake, remote from great capitals, a large, or, at least, sufficient library; (in each case, I believe, the library ranged, as to numerical amount, between seven and ten thousand;) and, like Gibbon, he was the most accomplished *litterateur* amongst the erudite scholars of his time, and the most of an erudite scholar amongst the accomplished *litterateurs*. After all these points of agreement known, it remains as a pure advantage on the side of Southey — a mere *lucro ponatur* — that he was a poet; and, by all men's confession, a respectable poet, brilliant in his descriptive powers, and fascinating in his narration, however much he might want of

'The vision and the faculty divine.'

It is remarkable amongst the series of parallelisms that have been or might be pursued between two men, both had the honor of retreating from a parliamentary life;* Gibbon, after some silent and inert experience of that warfare; Southey, with a prudent foresight of the ruin to his health and literary usefulness, won from the experience of his nearest friends.

I took leave of Southey in 1807, at the descent into the

* It illustrated the national sense of Southey's comprehensive talents, and of his political integrity, that Lord Radnor (the same who, under the courtesy title of Lord Folkestone, had distinguished himself for very democratic politics in the House of Commons, and had even courted the technical designation of *radical*) was the man who offered to bring in Southey for a borough dependent on *his* influence. Sir Robert Peel, under the same sense of Southey's merits, had offered him a baronetcy. Both honors were declined on the same prudential considerations, and with the same perfect disregard of all temptations from personal vanity.

vale of Legbesthwaite, as I have already noticed. One year afterwards, I became a permanent resident in his neighborhood; and, although, on various accounts, my intercourse with him was at no time very strict, partly from the very uncongenial constitution of my own mind, and the different direction of my studies, partly from my reluctance to levy any tax on time so precious and so fully employed, I was yet on such terms for the next ten or eleven years, that I might, in a qualified sense, call myself his friend.

Yes! there were long years through which Southey might respect me, I *him*. But the years came — for I have lived too long, reader, in relation to many things! and the report of me would have been better, or more uniform at least, had I died some twenty years ago — the years came, in which circumstances made me an Opium-Eater; years through which a shadow as of sad eclipse sate and rested upon my faculties; years through which I was careless of all but those who lived within *my* inner circle, within 'my heart of hearts;' years — ah! heavenly years! — through which I lived, beloved, *with* thee, *to* thee, *for* thee, *by* thee! Ah! happy, happy years! in which I was a mere football of reproach, but in which every wind and sounding hurricane of wrath or contempt flew by like chasing enemies past some defying gates of adamant, and left me too blessed in thy smiles — angel of life! — to heed the curses or the mocking which sometimes I heard raving outside of our impregnable Eden. What any man said of me in those days, what he thought, did I ask? did I care? Then it was, or nearly then, that I ceased to see, ceased to hear of Southey; as much abstracted from all which concerned the world outside, and from the Southeys, or even the Coleridges, in its van, as though I had lived with the darlings of my heart in the

centre of Canadian forests, and all men else in the centre of Hindostan.

But before I part from Greta Hall and its distinguished master, one word let me say, to protect myself from the imputation of sharing in some peculiar opinions of Southey with respect to political economy, which have been but too familiar to the world; and some opinions of the world, hardly less familiar, with respect to Southey himself and his accomplishments. Probably, with respect to the first, before this paper will be made public, I shall have sufficiently vindicated my own opinions in these matters by a distinct treatment of some great questions which lie at the base of all sound political economy; above all, the radical question of value, upon which no man has ever seen the full truth, except Mr. Ricardo; and, unfortunately, he had but little of the *polemic** skill which is required to meet the errors of his opponents. For it is noticeable that the most conspicuous of those opponents, viz. Mr. Malthus, though too much, I fear, actuated by a spirit of jealousy, and, therefore, likely enough to have scattered sophistry and disingenuous quibbling over the subject, had no need whatever of any further confusion for darkening and perplexing his themes than what inevitably belonged to his own most chaotic understanding.

* '*Polemic* skill.' — The word polemic is falsely interpreted by the majority of mere English readers. Having seldom seen it used except in a case of theological controversy, they fancy that it has some original and etymological appropriation to such a use; whereas it expresses, with regard to *all* subjects, without restriction, the functions of the debater as opposed to those of the original orator; the functions of him who meets error and unravels confusion or misrepresentation, opposed to those of him who lays down the abstract truth: truth absolute and without relation to the modes of viewing it. As well might the word *Radical* be limited to a political use as *Polemic* to controversial divinity.

He and Say, the Frenchman, were both plagued by understandings of the same quality — having a clear vision in shallow waters, and thus misleading them into the belief that they saw with equal clearness through the remote and the obscure; whereas, universally, their acuteness is like that of Hobbes — the gift of shallowness, and the result of *not* being subtle or profound enough to apprehend the true *locus* of the difficulty; and the barriers, which to them limit the view, and give to it, together with the contraction, all the distinctness and definite outline of limitation, are, in nine cases out of ten, the product of their own defective and aberrating vision, and not real barriers at all.

Meantime, until I write fully and deliberately upon this subject, I shall observe, simply, that all 'the Lake Poets,' as they are called, were not only in error, but most presumptuously in error, upon these subjects. They were ignorant of every principle belonging to every question alke in political economy, and they were obstinately bent upon learning nothing; they were all alike too proud to acknowledge that any man knew better than they, unless it were upon some purely professional subject, or some art remote from all intellectual bearings, such as conferred no honor in its possession. Wordsworth was the least tainted with error upon political economy; and that because he rarely applied his thoughts to any question of that nature, and, in fact, despised every study of a moral or political aspect, unless it drew its materials from such revelations of truth as could be won from the *prima philosophia* of human nature approached with the poet's eye. Coleridge was the one whom Nature and his own multifarious studies had the best qualified for thinking justly on a theme such as this; but he also was shut out from the possibility of knowledge by presumption, and the habit of

despising all the analytic studies of his own day — a habit for which he certainly had some warrant in the peculiar feebleness of all that has offered itself for *philosophy* in modern England. In particular, the religious discussions of the age, which touch inevitably at every point upon the profounder philosophy of man and his constitution, had laid bare the weakness of his own age to Coleridge's eye; and, because all was hollow and trivial in this direction, he chose to think that it was so in every other. And hence he has laid himself open to the just scoffs of persons far inferior to himself. In a foot-note in some late number of the *Westminster Review*, it is most truly asserted, (not in these words, but to this effect,) that Coleridges's 'Table Talk' exhibits a superannuation of error fit only for two centuries before. And what gave peculiar point to this display of ignorance was, that Coleridge did not, like Wordsworth, dismiss political economy from his notice disdainfully, as a puerile tissue of truisms, or of falsehoods not less obvious, but actually addressed himself to the subject; fancied he had made discoveries in the science; and even promised us a systematic work on its whole compass.

To give a sample of this new and reformed political economy, it cannot well be necessary to trouble the reader with more than one chimera culled from those which Mr. Coleridge first brought forward in his early model of 'The Friend.' He there propounds, as an original hypothesis of his own, that taxation never burthens a people, or, as a mere possibility, *can* burthen a people, simply by its amount. And why? Surely it draws from the purse of him who pays the quota, a sum which may be very difficult or even ruinous for him to pay, were it no more important in a public point of view than as so much deducted from his own unproductive expenditure.

and which may happen to have even a national importance if it should chance to be deducted from the funds destined to productive industry. What is Mr. Coleridge's answer to these little objections? Why, thus: the latter case he evades entirely, apparently not adverting to it as a case in any respect distinguished from the other; and this other — how is *that* answered? Doubtless, says Mr. Coleridge, it may be inconvenient to John or Samuel that a sum of money, otherwise disposable for their own separate uses, should be abstracted for the purchase of bayonets, or grape-shot; but with this the public, the commonwealth, have nothing to do, any more than with the losses at a gaming-table, where A's loss is B's gain — the total funds of the nation remaining exactly the same. It is, in fact, nothing but the accidental distribution of the funds which is affected — possibly for the worse, (no other 'worse,' however, is contemplated than shifting it into hands less deserving,) but, also, by possibility, for the better; and the better and the worse may be well supposed, in the long run, to balance each other. And that this is Mr. Coleridge's meaning cannot be doubted, upon looking into his illustrative image in support of it: he says that money raised by Government in the shape of taxes is like moisture exhaled from the earth — doubtless, for the moment injurious to the crops, but reacting abundantly for their final benefit when returning in the shape of showers. So natural, so obvious, so inevitable, by the way, is this conceit, (or, to speak less harshly, this hypothesis,) and so equally natural, obvious, and inevitable is the illustration from the abstraction and restoration of moisture, the exhalations and rains which affect this earth of ours, like the systole and diastole of the heart, the flux and reflux of the ocean, that precisely the same doctrine, and precisely the same exemplification of the

doctrine, is to be found in a Parliamentary speech,* of some orator in the famous long Parliament, about the year 1642. And to my mind it was a bitter humiliation to find, about 150 years afterwards, in a shallow French work, the famous '*Compte Rendu*' of the French Chancellor of the Exchequer, (Comptroller of the Finances) — Neckar — in that work, most humiliating it was to me, on a certain day, that I found this idle Coleridgian fantasy, not merely repeated, as it had been by scores — not merely anticipated by full twenty and two years, so that these French people had been beforehand with him, and had made Coleridge, to all appearance, their plagiarist, but also (hear it, ye gods!) answered, satisfactorily refuted, by this very feeble old sentimentalist, Neckar. Yes; positively Neckar, the slipshod old system-fancier and political driveller, had been so much above falling into the shallow snare, that he had, on sound principles, exposed its specious delusions.

Coleridge, the subtlest of men, in his proper walk, had brought forward, as a novel hypothesis of his own, in 1810, what Neckar, the rickety old charlatan, had scarcely condescended, in a hurried foot-note, to expose as a vulgar error and the shallowest of sophisms, in 1787-88. There was another enormous blunder which Coleridge was constantly authorizing, both in his writings and his conversation. Quoting a passage from Sir James Stuart, in which he speaks of a vine-dresser as adding nothing to the public wealth, unless his labor did something more than replace his own consumption — that is, unless it reproduced it together with a profit; he asks contemptuously, whether the happiness and moral dignity that

* Reported at length in a small quarto volume of the well known quarto size so much in use for Tracts, Pamphlets, &c., throughout the life of Milton - 1608–7?.

may have been exhibited in the vine-dresser's family are to pass for nothing? And then he proceeds to abuse the economists, because they take no account of such important considerations. Doubtless these are invaluable elements of social grandeur, in a *total* estimate of those elements. But what has political economy to do with them, a science openly professing to insulate and to treat apart from all other constituents of national well-being, those which concern the production and circulation of wealth?* So far from gaining anything by enlarging its field in the way demanded by Coleridge's critic, political economy would be as idly travelling out of the limits indicated and held forth in its very name, as if logic were to teach ethics, or ethics to teach diplomacy. With respect to the Malthusian doctrine of population, it is difficult to know who was the true proprietor of the arguments urged against it sometimes by Southey, sometimes by Coleridge. Those used by Southey are chiefly to be

* In fact, the exposure is as perfect in the case of an individual as in that of a nation, and more easily apprehended. Levy from an individual clothier £1000 in taxes, and afterwards return to him the whole of this sum in payment for the clothing of a regiment. Then, supposing profits to be at the rate of 15 per cent., he will have replaced £150 of his previous loss; even his gains will simply reinstate him in something that he had lost, and the remaining £850 will continue to be a dead loss; since the £850 restored to him, exactly replaces, by the terms of this case, his disbursements in wages and materials; if it did, more profits would not be at 15 per cent., according to the supposition. But Government may spend *more* than the £1000 with this clothier; they may spend £10,000. Doubtless, and in that case, on the same supposition as to profits, he will receive £1500 as a nominal gain and £500 will be a real gain, marked with the positive sign, (+.) But such a case would only prove, that nine other tax-payers, to an equal amount, had been left without any reimbursement at all. Strange, that so clear a case for an individual, should become obscure when it regards a nation.

found up and down the *Quarterly Review*. But a more elaborate attack was published by Hazlitt; and this must be supposed to speak the peculiar objections of Coleridge, for he was in the habit of charging Hazlitt with having pillaged his conversation, and occasionally garbled it throughout the whole of this book. One single argument there was, undoubtedly just, and it was one which others stumbled upon no less than Coleridge, exposing the fallacy of the supposed different laws of increase for vegetable and animal life. But though this frail prop withdrawn took away from Mr. Malthus's theory all its scientific rigor the main *practical* conclusions were still valid as respected any argument from the lakers; for the strongest of these arguments that ever came to my knowledge was a mere appeal — not *ad verecundiam*, in the ordinary sense of the phrase, but *ad honestatem*, as if it were shocking to the *honestum* of Roman ethics, (the *honnêteté* of French minor ethics,) that the check derived from self-restraint should not be supposed amply competent to redress all the dangers from a redundant population under any certain knowledge generally diffused that such dangers existed. But these are topics which it is sufficient in this place to have noticed, *currente calamo*. I was anxious, however, to protest against the probable imputation, that I, because generally so intense an admirer of these men, adopted their blind and hasty reveries in political economy.

There were (and perhaps more justly I might say there *are*) two other notions currently received about Southey, one of which is altogether erroneous, and the other true only in a limited sense. The first is, the belief that he belonged to what is known as the lake school in poetry; with respect to which all that I need say in this place, is involved in his own declaration frankly made to myself in

Easedale, during the summer of 1812; that he considered Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, and still more his principles as to the selection of subjects, and as to what constituted a poetic treatment, as founded on error. There is certainly some community of phraseology between Southey and the other lakers, naturally arising out of their joint reverence for Scriptural language: this was a field in which they met in common: else it shows but little discernment and power of valuing the essences of things, to have classed Southey in the same school with Wordsworth and Coleridge. The other popular notion about Southey, which I conceive to be expressed with much too little limitation, regards his style. He has been praised, and justly, for his plain, manly, unaffected English, until the parrot echoers of other men's judgments, who adopt all they relish with undistinguishing blindness, have begun to hold him up as a great master of his own language, and a classical model of fine composition. Now, if the error were only in the degree, it would not be worth while to notice it; but the truth is, that Southey's defects in this particular power, are as striking as his characteristic graces. Let a subject arise — and almost in any path, there is a ready possibility that it should — in which a higher tone is required, of splendid declamation, or of impassionate fervor, and Southey's style will immediately betray its want of the loftier qualities as flagrantly as it now asserts its powers in that unpretending form, which is best suited to his level character of writing and his humbler choice of themes. It is to mistake the character of Southey's mind, which is elevated but not sustained by the higher modes of enthusiasm to think otherwise. Were a magnificent dedication required, moving with a stately and measured solemnity, and putting forward some majestic pretensions, arising out of a long and laborious life;

were a pleading required against some capital abuse of the earth — war, slavery, oppression in its thousand forms; were a *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* required; Southey's is not the mind, and, by a necessary consequence, Southey's is not the style, for carrying such purposes into full and memorable effect. His style is *therefore* good, because it has been suited to his themes; and those themes have hitherto been either narrative, which usually imposes a modest diction, and a modest structure of sentences, or argumentative in that class which is too overburthened with details, with replies, with interruption, and every mode of discontinuity, to allow a thought of eloquence, or of the periodic style which a perfect eloquence instinctively seeks.

I here close my separate notice of the Lake Poets — meaning those three who were originally so denominated — three men upon whom posterity, in every age, will look back with interest as profound as, perhaps, belongs to any other names of our era; for it happens, not unfrequently, that the *personal* interest in the author is not in the direct ratio of that which belongs to his works: and the character of an author, better qualified to command a vast popularity for the creations of his pen, is oftentimes more of a universal character, less peculiar, less fitted to stimulate the curiosity, or to sustain the sympathy of the intellectual, than the profounder and more ascetic solemnity of a Wordsworth, or the prodigal and magnificent eccentricities of a Coleridge. With respect to both of these gifted men, some interesting notices still remain in arrear; but these will more properly come forward in their natural places, as they happen to arise in after years in connection with my own memoirs.

CHAPTER X.

RECOLLECTIONS OF GRASMERE.

I now resume my memoirs, from the moment of my leaving Wordsworth's cottage, after one week of delightful intercourse with him and his sister, about the twelfth of November, 1807.

Soon after my return to Oxford, I received a letter from Miss Wordsworth, asking for any subscriptions I might succeed in obtaining, amongst my college friends, in aid of the funds then raising in behalf of an orphan family, who had become such by an affecting tragedy that had occurred within a few weeks from my visit to Grasmere.

This calamitous incident, interesting for itself as well as for having drawn forth some beautiful stanzas from Wordsworth, had a separate and peculiar importance in reference to my own life — having been the remote occasion of another misfortune that brought to myself the first deep draught from the cup of sorrow which it was destined that I should drink. Miss Wordsworth drew up a brief memoir of the whole affair. This, I believe, went into the hands of the royal family; at any rate, the august ladies of that house (all or some of them) were amongst the many subscribers to the orphan children; and it must be satisfactory to all who shared, and happen to recollect their own share in that seasonable work of charity, that the money then collected under the auspices of the Wordsworths, proved sufficient, with judicious

administration and superintendence from a committee of the neighboring ladies in Ambleside, to educate and settle respectably, in useful callings, the whole of a very large family, not one of whom, to my knowledge, has fared otherwise than prosperously, or, to speak of the very lowest case, decently in their subsequent lives as men and women, long since surrounded by children of their own. Miss Wordsworth's simple but fervid memoir not being within my reach at this moment, I must trust to my own recollections and my own less personal impressions to retrace the story; which, after all, is not much of a story to excite or to impress, unless for those who can find a sufficient interest in the trials and unhappy fate of hard-working peasants, and can reverence the fortitude which, being lodged in so frail a tenement as the person of a little girl, not much, if anything, above nine years old, could face an occasion of sudden mysterious abandonment — of uncertain peril — and could tower up, during one night, into the perfect energies of womanhood — energies unsuspected even by herself — under the mere pressure of difficulty, and the sense of new-born responsibilities awfully bequeathed to her, and in the most lonely, perhaps, of all English habitations.

The little valley of Easedale, which, and the neighborhood of which, were the scenes of these interesting events, is, on its own account, one of the most impressive solitudes amongst the mountains of the lake district; and I must pause to describe it. Easedale is impressive, *first*, *as* a solitude; for the depth of the seclusion is brought out and forced more pointedly upon the feelings by the thin scattering of houses over its sides, and the surface of what may be called its floor. These are not above five or six at the most; and one, the remotest of the whole, was untenanted for all the thirty years of my acquaintance

with the place. *Secondly*, it is impressive from the excessive loveliness which adorns its little area. This is broken up into small fields and miniature meadows, separated not — as too often happens, with sad injury to the beauty of the lake country — by stone walls, but sometimes by little hedge-rows, sometimes by little sparkling, pebbly 'beck,' lustrous to the very bottom, and not too broad for a child's flying leap; and sometimes by wild self-sown woodlands of birch, alder, holly, mountain ash, and hazel, that meander through the valley, intervening the different estates with natural sylvan marches, and giving cheerfulness in winter, by the bright scarlet of their barrier. It is the character of all the northern English valleys, as I have already remarked — and it is a character first noticed by Wordsworth — that they assume, in their bottom areas, the level floor-like shape, making everywhere a direct angle with the surrounding hills, and definitely marking out the margin of their outlines; whereas the Welsh valleys have too often the glaring imperfection of the basin shape, which allows no sense of any absolute valley surface; the hills are already commencing at the very centre of what is called the level area. The little valley of Easedale is, in this respect, as highly finished as in every other; and in the Westmoreland spring, which may be considered May and the earlier half of June, whilst the grass in the meadows is yet short from the habit of keeping the sheep on it until a much later period than elsewhere, (viz. until the mountains are so far cleared of snow, and the probability of storms, as to make it safe to send them out on their summer migration,) the little fields of Easedale have the most lawny appearance, and from the humidity of the Westmoreland * climate, the most verdant

* It is pretty generally known, perhaps, that Westmoreland and Devonshire are the two rainiest counties in England. At Kirkby,

that it is possible to imagine; and on a gentle vernal day — when vegetation has been far enough advanced to bring out the leaves, an April sun gleaming coyly through the clouds, and genial April rain gently pencilling the light spray of the wood with tiny pearl drops — I have often thought, whilst looking with silent admiration upon this exquisite composition of landscape, with its miniature fields running up like forest glades into miniature woods; its little columns of smoke, breathing up like incense to the household gods, from the hearths of two or three picturesque cottages — abodes of simple primitive manners, and what, from personal knowledge, I will call humble virtue — whilst my eyes rested on this charming combination of lawns and shrubberies, I have thought that if a scene on this earth could deserve to be sealed up, like the valley of Rasselas, against the intrusion of the world — if there were one to which a man would willingly surrender himself a prisoner for the years of a long life — that it is this Easedale — which would justify the choice, and recompense the sacrifice. But there is a third advantage possessed by this Easedale, above other rival valleys, in the sublimity of its mountain barriers. In one of its many rocky recesses is seen a 'force,' (such is the local name for a cataract,) white with foam, descending at all seasons with respectable strength, and, after the melting of snows, with an Alpine violence. Follow the leading of this 'force' for three quarters of a mile, and you come to a little mountain lake, locally termed a 'tarn,'* the very

Lonsdale, lying just on the outer margin of the Lake district, one-fifth more rain is computed to fall than in the adjacent counties on the same side of England. But it is also notorious, that the western side of the island universally is more rainy than the east. Collins calls it the Showery West.

* A tarn is a lake, generally (indeed always) a small one: and always, as I think (but this I have heard disputed) lying above the

finest and most gloomy sublime of its class. From this tarn it was, I doubt not, though applying it to another, that Wordsworth drew the circumstances of his general description : —

> ' Thither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
> And mists that spread the flying shroud;
> And winds
> That, if they could, would hurry past :
> But that enormous barrier binds it fast.
> &c. &c. &c.
> The rocks repeat the raven's croak,
> In symphony austere.'

And far beyond this ' enormous barrier,' that thus imprisons the very winds, tower upwards the aspiring heads (usually enveloped in cloud and mist) of Glaramara, Bow Fell, and the other fells of Langdale Head and Borrowdale. Finally, superadded to the other circumstances of solitude, arising out of the rarity of human life, and of the signs which mark the goings on of human life — two other accidents there are of Easedale, which sequester it from the world, and intensify its depth of solitude beyond what could well be looked for or thought possible in any vale within a district so beaten by modern tourists. One is, that it is a chamber within a chamber, or rather a closet within a chamber — a chapel within a cathedral — a little private oratory within a chapel. For Easedale is, in fact, a dependency of Grasmere — a little recess lying within the same general basin of mountains, but partitioned off by a screen of rock and swelling uplands, so inconsidera-

level of the inhabited valleys and the large lakes; and subject to this further condition, as first noticed by Wordsworth, that it has no main feeder. Now, this latter accident of the tarn at once explains and authenticates my account of the word, viz. — that it is the Danish word taaren, (*a trickling ;*) a deposit of waters from the weeping of rain down the smooth faces of the rocks.

ble in height, that, when surveyed from the commanding summits of Fairfield or Seat Sandal, they seem to subside into the level area, and melt into the general surface. But, viewed from below, these petty heights form a sufficient partition; which is pierced, however, in two points — once by the little murmuring brook threading its silvery line onwards to the lake of Grasmere, and again by a little rough lane, barely capable (and I think not capable in all points) of receiving a post-chaise. This little lane keeps ascending amongst wooded steeps for a quarter of a mile; and then, by a downward course of a hundred yards or so, brings you to a point at which the little valley suddenly bursts upon you with as full a revelation of its tiny proportions, as the traversing of the wooded back-grounds will permit. The lane carries you at last to a little wooden bridge, practicable for pedestrians; but, for carriages, even the doubtful road, already mentioned, ceases altogether: and this fact, coupled with the difficulty of suspecting such a lurking paradise from the high road through Grasmere, at every point of which the little hilly partition crowds up into one mass with the capital barriers in the rear, seeming, in fact, not so much to blend with them as to be a part of them, may account for the fortunate neglect of Easedale in the tourist's route; and also because there is no one separate object, such as a lake or a splendid cataract, to bribe the interest of those who are hunting after sights; for the 'force' is comparatively small, and the tarn is beyond the limits of the vale, as well as difficult of approach.

One other circumstance there is about Easedale, which completes its demarcation, and makes it as entirely a land-locked little park, within a ring-fence of mountains, as ever human art, if rendered capable of dealing with mountains and their arrangement, could have contrived

The sole approach, as I have mentioned, is from Grasmere; and some *one* outlet there must inevitably be in every vale that can be interesting to a human occupant, since without water it would not be habitable; and running water must force an exit for itself, and, consequently, an inlet for the world; but, properly speaking, there is no other. For, when you explore the remoter end of the vale, at which you suspect some communication with the world outside, you find before you a most formidable amount of climbing, the extent of which can hardly be measured where there is no solitary object of human workmanship or vestige of animal life, not a sheep-track even, not a shepherd's hovel, but rock and heath, heath and rock, tossed about in monotonous confusion. And, after the ascent is mastered, you descend into a second vale — long, narrow, sterile, known by the name of 'Far Easedale:' from which point, if you could drive a tunnel below the everlasting hills, perhaps six or seven miles might bring you to the nearest habitation of man, in Borrowdale; but, crossing the mountains, the road cannot be less than twelve or fourteen, and, in point of fatigue, at the least twenty. This long valley, which is really terrific at noon-day, from its utter loneliness and desolation, completes the defences of little sylvan Easedale. There is one door into it from the Grasmere side; but that door is hidden; and on every other quarter there is no door at all, nor any, the roughest, access, but what would demand a day's walking.

Such is the solitude — so deep, so seventimes guarded, and so rich in miniature beauty — of Easedale; and in this solitude it was that George and Sarah Green, two poor and hard-working peasants, dwelt, with a numerous family of small children. Poor as they were, they had won the general respect of the neighborhood, from the

uncomplaining firmness with which they bore the hardships of their lot, and from the decent attire in which the good mother of the family contrived to send out her children to the Grasmere school. It is a custom, and a very ancient one, in Westmoreland — and I have seen the same usage prevailing in southern Scotland — that any sale by auction, whether of cattle, of farming produce, farming stock, wood, or household furniture — and seldom a fortnight passes without something of the sort — forms an excuse for the good women, throughout the whole circumference of perhaps a dozen valleys, to assemble at the place of sale with the nominal purpose of aiding the sale, or of buying something they may happen to want. No doubt the real business of the sale attracts numbers; although of late years — that is, for the last twenty-five years, through which so many sales of furniture the most expensive, (hastily made by casual settlers, on the wing for some fresher novelty,) — have made this particular article almost a drug in the country; and the interest in such sales has greatly declined. But, in 1807, this fever of founding villas or cottages *ornées*, was yet only beginning; and a sale, except it were of the sort exclusively interesting to farming men, was a kind of general intimation to the country, from the owner of the property, that he would, on that afternoon, be 'at home' for all comers, and hoped to see as large an attendance as possible. Accordingly, it was the almost invariable custom — and often, too, when the parties were far too poor for such an effort of hospitality — to make ample provision, not of eatables, but of liquor, for all who came. Even a gentleman, who should happen to present himself on such a festal occasion, by way of seeing the 'humors' of the scene, was certain of meeting the most cordial welcome. The good woman of the house more particu-

larly testified her sense of the honor done to her house, and was sure to seek out some cherished and solitary article of china — a wreck from a century back — in order that he, being a porcelain man amongst so many deaf men and women, might have a porcelain cup to drink from.

The main secret of attraction at these sales — many a score of which I have attended — was the social rendezvous thus effected between parties so remote from each other, (either by real distance, or by the virtual distance which results from a separation by difficult tracts of hilly country,) that, in fact, without some such common object, and oftentimes something like a bisection of the interval between them, they would not be likely to hear of each other for months, or actually to meet for years. This principal charm of the 'gathering,' seasoned, doubtless, to many by the certain anticipation that the whole budget of rural scandal would then and there be opened, was not assuredly diminished to the men by the anticipation of excellent ale, (usually brewed six or seven weeks before, in preparation for the event,) and possibly of still more excellent *pow-sowdy*, (a combination of ale, spirits, and spices;) nor to the women by some prospect, not so inevitably fulfilled, but pretty certain in a liberal house, of communicating their news over excellent tea. Even the auctioneer was always 'part and parcel' of the mirth: he was always a rustic old humorist, a 'character,' and a jovial drunkard, privileged in certain good-humored liberties and jokes with all bidders, gentle or simple, and furnished with an ancient inheritance of jests appropriate to the articles offered for sale — jests that had, doubtless, done their office from Elizabeth's golden days; but no more, on that account, failed of their expected effect, with either man or woman of this nineteenth century,

than the sun fails to gladden the heart because it is that same old obsolete sun that has gladdened it for thousands of years.

One thing, however, in mere justice to the poor indigenous Dalesmen of Westmoreland and Cumberland, I am bound, in this place, to record, that, often as I have been at these sales, and through many a year before even a scattering of gentry began to attend, yet so true to the natural standard of politeness was the decorum uniformly maintained, even the old buffoon (as sometimes he was) of an auctioneer never forgot himself so far as to found upon any article of furniture a jest that could have called up a painful blush in any woman's face. He might, perhaps, go so far as to awaken a little rosy confusion upon some young bride's countenance, when pressing a cradle upon her attention: but never did I hear him utter, nor would he have been tolerated in uttering a scurrilous or disgusting jest, such as might easily have been suggested by something offered at a household sale. Such jests as these I heard for the first time, at a sale in Grasmere in 1814; and, I am ashamed to say it, from some 'gentlemen' of a great city. And it grieved me to see the effect, as it expressed itself upon the manly faces of the grave Dalesmen — a sense of insult offered to their women, who met in confiding reliance upon the forbearance of the men, and upon their regard for the dignity of the female sex, this feeling struggling with the habitual respect they are inclined to show towards what they suppose gentle blood and superior education. Taken generally, however, these were the most picturesque and festal meetings which the manners of the country produced. There you saw all ages and both sexes assembled: there you saw old men whose heads would have been studies for Guido; there you saw the most colossal

and stately figures amongst the young men that England has to show; there the most beautiful young women. There it was that sometimes I saw a lovelier face than ever I shall see again: there it was that local peculiarities of usage or of language were best to be studied; there — at least in the earlier years of my residence in that district — that the social benevolence, the grave wisdom, the innocent mirth, and the neighborly kindness of the people, most delightfully expanded and expressed themselves with the least reserve.

To such a scene it was, to a sale of domestic furniture at the house of some proprietor on the point of giving up housekeeping, perhaps in order to live with a married son or daughter, that George and Sarah Green set forward in the forenoon of a day fated to be their last on earth. The sale was to take place in Langdale Head; to which, from their own cottage in Easedale, it was possible in daylight, and supposing no mist upon the hills, to find out a short cut of not more than eight miles. By this route they went; and notwithstanding the snow lay on the ground, they reached their destination in safety. The attendance at the sale must have been diminished by the rigorous state of the weather; but still the scene was a gay one as usual. Sarah Green, though a good and worthy woman in her maturer years, had been imprudent and — as the tender consideration of the country is apt to express it — 'unfortunate' in her youth. She had an elder daughter who was illegitimate; and I believe the father of this girl was dead. The girl herself was grown p; and the peculiar solicitude of poor Sarah's maternal heart was at this time called forth on *her* behalf; she wished to see her placed in a very respectable house, where the mistress was distinguished for her notable qualities and her success in forming good servants. This

object, so important to Sarah Green in the narrow range of her cares, as in a more exalted family it might be to obtain a ship for a lieutenant that had passed as master and commander, or to get him 'posted' — occupied her almost throughout the sale. A doubtful answer had been given to her application; and Sarah was going about the crowd, and weaving her person in and out in order to lay hold of this or that intercessor, who might have, or might seem to have, some weight with the principal person concerned.

This was the last occupation which is known to have stirred the pulses of her heart. An illegitimate child is everywhere, even in the indulgent society of Westmoreland Dalesmen, under some shade of discountenance[5]; so that Sarah Green might consider her duty to be the stronger toward the child of her 'misfortune.' And she probably had another reason for her anxiety — as some words dropped by her on this evening led people to presume — in her conscientious desire to introduce her daughter into a situation less perilous than that which had compassed her own youthful steps with snares. If so, it is painful to know that the virtuous wish, whose

> ——— 'vital warmth
> Gave the last human motion to the heart,'

should not have been fulfilled. She was a woman of ardent and affectionate spirit, of which Miss Wordsworth's memoir, or else her subsequent memorials in conversation, (I forget which,) gave some circumstantial and affecting instances, which I cannot now recall with accuracy. This ardor it was, and her impassioned manner, that drew attention to what she did; for otherwise, she was too poor a person to be important in the estimation of strangers, and, of all possible situations, to be important at a sale, where the public attention was

naturally fixed upon the chief purchasers, and the attention of the purchasers upon the chief competitors. Hence it happened, that, after she ceased to challenge notice by the emphasis of her solicitations for her daughter, she ceased to be noticed at all; and nothing was recollected of her subsequent behavior until the time arrived for general separation. This time was considerably after sunset; and the final recollections of the crowd with respect to George and Sarah Green, were, that, upon their intention being understood to retrace their morning path and to attempt the perilous task of dropping down into Easedale from the mountains above Langdale Head, a sound of remonstrance arose from many quarters However, at a moment when everybody was in the hurry of departure — and, to persons of their mature age, the opposition could not be very obstinate — party after party rode off; the meeting melted away, or, as the northern phrase is, *scaled;** and, at length, nobody was left of any weight that could pretend to influence the decision of elderly people. They quitted the scene, professing to obey some advice or other upon the choice of roads; but, at as early a point as they could do so unobserved, began to ascend the hills, everywhere open from the rude carriage way. After this, they were seen no more. They had disappeared into the cloud of death. Voices were heard some hours afterwards, from the mountains — voices, as some thought, of alarm; others said, no — that it was only the voices of jovial people, carried by the

* *Scaled* — *scale* is a verb both active and neuter. I use it here as a neuter verb, in the sense (a Cumberland sense) of separating to all the thirty-two points of the compass. But by Shakspeare it is used in an active or transitive sense. Speaking of some secret news, he says — 'We'll scale it a little more,' *i. e.* spread it in all directions.

wind into uncertain regions. The result was, that no attention was paid to the sounds.

That night, in little peaceful Easedale, six children sat by a peat fire, expecting the return of their parents, upon whom they depended for their daily bread. Let a day pass, and they were starved. Every sound was heard with anxiety; for all this was reported many a hundred times to Miss Wordsworth, and those who, like myself, were never wearied of hearing the details. Every sound, every echo amongst the hills was listened to for five hours — from seven to twelve. At length, the eldest girl of the family — about nine years old — told her little brothers and sisters to go to bed. They had been taught obedience; and all of them, at the voice of their eldest sister, went off fearfully to their beds. What could be *their* fears, it is difficult to say! they had no knowledge to instruct them in the dangers of the hills; but the eldest sister, always averred that they had a deep solicitude, as she herself had, about their parents. Doubtless she had communicated her fears to *them.* Some time, in the course of the evening — but it was late and after midnight — the moon arose and shed a torrent of light upon the Langdale fells, which had already, long hours before witnessed in darkness the death of their parents. It may be well here to cite Mr. Wordsworth's stanzas: —

'Who weeps for strangers? Many wept
For George and Sarah Green;
Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
Whose graves may here be seen.

By night upon these stormy fells,
Did wife and husband roam;
Six little ones at home had left,
And could not find that home.

For *any* dwelling-place of man
As vainly did they seek.
He perished; and a voice was heard —
The widow's lonely shriek.

Not many steps, and she was left
A body without life —
A few short steps were the chain that bound
The husband to the wife.

Now do these sternly-featured hills
Look gently on this grave;
And quiet now are the depths of air,
As a sea without a wave.

But deeper lies the heart of peace
In quiet more profound;
The heart of quietness is here
Within this churchyard bound.

And from all agony of mind
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star.

O darkness of the grave! how deep,
After that living night —
That last and dreary living one
Of sorrow and affright!

O sacred marriage bed of death,
That keeps them side by side
In bond of peace, in bond of love,
That may not be untied!'

That night, and the following morning, came a further and a heavier fall of snow; in consequence of which the poor children were completely imprisoned, and cut off from all possibility of communicating with their next neighbors. The brook was too much for them to leap; and the little, crazy, wooden bridge could not be crossed or even approached with safety, from the drifting of the

snow having made it impossible to ascertain the exact situation of some treacherous hole in its timbers, which, if trod upon, would have let a small child drop through into the rapid waters. Their parents did not return. For some hours of the morning, the children clung to the hope that the extreme severity of the night had tempted them to sleep in Langdale ; but this hope forsook them as the day wore away. Their father, George Green, had served as a soldier, and was an active man, of ready resources, who would not, under any circumstances, have failed to force a road back to his family, had he been still living ; and this reflection, or rather semi-conscious feeling, which the awfulness of their situation forced upon the minds of all but the mere infants, taught them to feel the extremity of their danger. Wonderful it is to see the effect of sudden misery, sudden grief, or sudden fear, (where they do not utterly upset the faculties,) in sharpening the intellectual perceptions. Instances must have fallen in the way of most of us. And I have noticed frequently that even sudden and intense bodily pain is part of the machinery employed by nature for quickening the development of the mind. The perceptions of infants are not, in fact, excited *gradatim* and continuously, but *per saltum*, and by unequal starts. At least, in the case of my own children, one and all, I have remarked, that, after any very severe fit of those peculiar pains to which the delicate digestive organs of most infants are liable, there always become apparent on the following day a very considerable increase of vital energy and of vivacious attention to the objects around them. The poor desolate children of Blentarn Ghyll,* hourly becoming

* Wordsworth's conjecture as to the origin of the name is probably the true one. There is at a little elevation above the place, a

more rufefully convinced that they were orphans, gave many evidences of this awaking power, as lodged, by a providential arrangement, in situations of trial that most require it. They huddled together, in the evening, round their hearth-fire of peats, and held their little councils upon what was to be done towards any chance — if chance remained — of yet giving aid to their parents; for a slender hope had sprung up that some hovel or sheep-fold might have furnished them a screen (or, in Westmoreland phrase, a *bield*) against the weather quarter of the storm, in which hovel they might be lying disabled or snowed up; and, secondly, as regarded themselves, in what way they were to make known their situation, in case the snow should continue or increase; for starvation stared them in the face, if they should be confined for many days to their house.

Meantime, the eldest sister, little Agnes, though sadly alarmed, and feeling the sensation of *eariness* as twilight came on, and she looked out from the cottage door to the dreadful fells, on which, too probably, her parents were lying corpses, (and possibly not many hundred yards from their own threshold,) yet exerted herself to take all the measures which their own prospects made prudent. And she told Miss Wordsworth, that, in the midst of the oppression on her little spirit, from vague ghostly terrors, she did not fail, however, to draw some comfort from the consideration, that the very same causes which produced

small concave tract of ground, shaped like the bed of a tarn. Some causes having diverted the supplies of water, at some remote period, from the little reservoir, the tarn has consequently disappeared; but the bed, and other indications of a tarn, (particularly a little ghyll, or steep rocky cleft for discharging the water,) having remained as memorials that it once existed, the country people have called it the Blind Tarn.

their danger in one direction, sheltered them from danger of another kind — such dangers as she knew, from books that she had read, would have threatened a little desolate flock of children in other parts of England; that, if they could not get out into Grasmere, on the other hand, bad men, and wild seafaring foreigners, who sometimes passed along the high road in that vale, could not get to them; and that, as to their neighbors, so far from having anything to fear in that quarter, their greatest apprehension was lest they might not be able to acquaint them with their situation; but that, if that could be accomplished, the very sternest amongst them were kind-hearted people, that would contend with each other for the privilege of assisting them. Somewhat cheered with these thoughts, and having caused all her brothers and sisters — except the two little things, not yet of a fit age — to kneel down and say the prayers which they had been taught, this admirable little maiden turned herself to every household task that could have proved useful to them in a long captivity. First of all, upon some recollection that the clock was nearly going down, she wound it up. Next, she took all the milk which remained from what her mother had provided for the children's consumption during her absence, and for the breakfast of the following morning — this luckily was still in sufficient plenty for two day's consumption, (skimmed or 'blue' milk being only one halfpenny a quart, and the quart a most redundant one, in Grasmere) — this she took and scalded, so as to save it from turning sour. That done, she next examined the meal chest; made the common oatmeal porridge of the country, (the burgoo of the royal navy;) but put all of the children, except the two youngest, on short allowance; and, by way of reconciling them in some measure to this stinted meal, she found out a little hoard of flour, part of

which she baked for them upon the hearth into little cakes; and this unusual delicacy persuaded them to think that they had been celebrating a feast. Next, before night coming on should make it too trying to her own feelings, or before fresh snow coming on might make it impossible, she issued out of doors. There her first task was, with the assistance of two younger brothers, to carry in from the peatstack as many peats as might serve them for a week's consumption. That done, in the second place, she examined the potatoes, buried in 'brackens,' (that is, withered fern:) these were not many; and she thought it better to leave them where they were, excepting as many as would make a single meal, under a fear that the heat of their cottage would spoil them, if removed.

Having thus made all the provision in her power for supporting their own lives, she turned her attention to the cow. Her she milked; but, unfortunately, the milk she gave, either from being badly fed, or from some other cause, was too trifling to be of much consideration towards the wants of a large family. Here, however, her chief anxiety was to get down the hay for the cow's food from a loft above the outhouse; and in this she succeeded but imperfectly, from want of strength and size to cope with the difficulties of the case; besides that the increasing darkness by this time, together with the gloom of the place, made it a matter of great self-conquest for her to work at all; and, as respected one night at any rate, she placed the cow in a situation of luxurious warmth and comfort. Then retreating into the warm house, and 'barring' the door, she sat down to undress the two youngest of the children; them she laid carefully and cosily in their little nests up stairs, and sang them to sleep. The rest she kept up to bear her company until the clock should tell them it was midnight; up to which

time she had still a lingering hope that some welcome shout from the hills above, which they were all to strain their ears to catch, might yet assure them that they were not wholly orphans, even though one parent should have perished. No shout, it may be supposed, was ever heard; nor could a shout, in any case, have been heard, for the night was one of tumultuous wind. And though, amidst its ravings, sometimes they fancied a sound of voices, still, in the dead lulls that now and then succeeded, they heard nothing to confirm their hopes. As last services to what she might now have called her own little family, Agnes took precautions against the drifting of the snow within the door and the imperfect window, which had caused them some discomfort on the preceding day; and, finally, she adopted the most systematic and elaborate plans for preventing the possibility of their fire being extinguished, which, in the event of their being thrown upon the ultimate resource of their potatoes, would be absolutely (and in any event nearly) indispensable to their existence.

The night slipped away, and another morning came, bringing with it no better hopes of any kind. Change there had been none but for the worse. The snow had greatly increased in quantity; and the drifts seemed far more formidable. A second day passed like the first; little Agnes still keeping her little flock quiet, and tolerably comfortable; and still calling on all the elders in succession, to say their prayers, morning and night.

A third day came; and whether it was on that or on the fourth, I do not now recollect; but on one or other there came a welcome gleam of hope. The arrangement of the snow drifts had shifted during the night, and though the wooden bridge was still impracticable, a low wall had been exposed, over which, by a very considerable

circuit, and crossing the low shoulder of a hill, it seemed possible that a road might be found into Grasmere. In some walls it was necessary to force gaps; but this was effected without much difficulty, even by children; for the Westmoreland walls are always 'open,' that is, uncemented with mortar; and the push of a stick will readily detach so much from the upper part of an old crazy field wall, as to lower it sufficiently for female or for childish steps to pass. The little boys accompanied their sister until she came to the other side of the hill, which, lying more sheltered from the weather, and to windward, offered a path onwards comparatively easy. Here they parted; and little Agnes pursued her solitary mission to the nearest house she could find accessible in Grasmere.

No house could have proved a wrong one in such a case. Miss Wordsworth and I often heard the description renewed, of the horror which, in an instant, displaced the smile of hospitable greeting, when little weeping Agnes told her sad tale. No tongue can express the fervid sympathy which travelled through the vale, like the fire in an American forest, when it was learned that neither George nor Sarah Green had been seen by their children since the day of the Langdale sale. Within half an hour, or little more, from the remotest parts of the valley — some of them distant nearly two miles from the point of rendezvous — all the men of Grasmere had assembled at the little cluster of cottages called 'Kirktown,' from their adjacency to the venerable parish church of St. Oswald. There were at the time I settled in Grasmere, (viz. in the spring of 1809, and, therefore, I suppose at this time, fifteen months previously,) about sixty-three households in the vale; and the total number of souls was about two hundred and sixty-five; so that the number of fighting men would be about sixty or sixty-six, according to the com-

mon way of computing the proportion; and the majority were so athletic and powerfully built, that, at the village games of wrestling and leaping, Professor Wilson, and some visitors of his and mine, scarcely one of whom was under five feet eleven in height, with proportionable breadth, seem but middle sized men amongst the towering forms of the Dalesmen. Sixty at least, after a short consultation as to the plan of operations, and for arranging the kind of signals by which they were to communicate from great distances, and in the perilous events of mists, or snow storms, set off, with the speed of Alpine hunters, to the hills. The dangers of the undertaking were considerable, under the uneasy and agitated state of the weather; and all the women of the vale were in the greatest anxiety, until night brought them back, in a body, unsuccessful. Three days at the least, and I rather think five, the search was ineffectual; which arose partly from the great extent of the ground to be examined, and partly from the natural mistake made of ranging almost exclusively on the earlier days on that part of the hills over which the path of Easedale might be presumed to have been selected under any reasonable latitude of circuitousness. But the fact is, when the fatal accident (for such it has often proved) of a permanent mist surprises a man on the hills, if he turns and loses his direction, he is a lost man; and without doing this so as to lose the power of *s'orienter* in one instant, it is well known how difficult it is to avoid losing it insensibly and by degrees. Baffling snow showers are the worst kind of mists. And the poor Greens had, under that kind of confusion, wandered many a mile out of their proper track.

The zeal of the people, meantime, was not in the least abated, but rather quickened, by the wearisome disappointments; every hour of daylight was turned to ac-

count; no man of the valley ever came home to dinner; and the reply of a young shoemaker, on the fourth night's return, speaks sufficiently for the unabated spirit of the vale. Miss Wordsworth asked what he would do on the next morning. 'Go up again, of course,' was his answer. But what if to-morrow also should turn out like all the rest? 'Why go up in stronger force on the next day.' Yet this man was sacrificing his own daily earnings without a chance of recompense. At length sagacious dogs were taken up; and, about noonday, a shout from an aerial height, amongst thick volumes of cloudy vapor, propagated through repeating bands of men from a distance of many miles, conveyed as by telegraph the news that the bodies were found. George Green was found lying at the bottom of a precipice, from which he had fallen. Sarah Green was found on the summit of the precipice; and, by laying together all the indications of what had passed, the sad hieroglyphics of their last agonies, it was conjectured that the husband had desired his wife to pause for a few minutes, wrapping her, meantime, in his own great coat, whilst he should go forward and reconnoitre the ground, in order to catch a sight of some object (rocky peak, or tarn, or peat-field) which might ascertain their real situation. Either the snow above, already lying in drifts, or the blinding snow storms driving into his eyes, must have misled him as to the nature of the circumjacent ground; for the precipice over which he had fallen was but a few yards from the spot in which he had quitted his wife. The depth of the descent, and the fury of the wind, (almost always violent on these cloudy altitudes,) would prevent any distinct communication between the dying husband below and his despairing wife above; but it was believed by the shepherds, best acquainted with the ground and the range of sound as

regarded the capacities of the human ear, under the probable circumstances of the storm, that Sarah might have caught, at intervals, the groans of her unhappy partner, supposing that his death were at all a lingering one. Others, on the contrary, supposed her to have gathered this catastrophe rather from the want of any sounds, and from his continued absence, than from any one distinct or positive expression of it; both because the smooth and unruffled surface of the snow where he lay seemed to argue that he had died without a struggle, perhaps without a groan, and because that tremendous sound of 'hurtling' in the upper chambers of the air, which often accompanies a snow storm, when combined with heavy gales of wind, would utterly oppress and stifle (as they conceived) any sounds so feeble as those from a dying man. In any case, and by whatever sad language of sounds or signs, positive or negative, she might have learned or guessed her loss, it was generally agreed that the wild shrieks heard towards midnight in Langdale * Head announced the agonizing moment which brought to her now widowed heart the conviction of utter desolation and of final aban-

* I once heard, also, in talking with a Langdale family upon this tragic tale, that the sounds had penetrated into the valley of Little Langdale; which is possible enough. For although this interesting recess of the entire Langdale basin (which bears somewhat of the same relation to Great Langdale that Easedale bears to Grasmere) does, in fact, lie beyond Langdale Head by the entire breadth of that dale, yet from the singular accident of having its area raised far above the level of the adjacent vales, one most solitary section of Little Langdale (in which lies a tiny lake, and on the banks of that lake dwells one solitary family) being exactly at right angles both to Langdale Head and to the other complementary section of the Lesser Langdale, is brought into a position and an elevation virtually much nearer to objects (especially to audible objects) on the Langdale Fells.

donment to her own fast-fleeting energies. It seemed probable that the sudden disappearance of her husband from her pursuing eyes would teach her to understand his fate; and that the consequent indefinite apprehension of instant death lying all around the point on which she sat, had kept her stationary to the very attitude in which her husband left her, until her failing powers and the increasing bitterness of the cold, to one no longer in motion, would soon make those changes of place impossible, which, at any rate, had appeared too dangerous. The footsteps in some places, wherever drifting had not obliterated them, yet traceable as to the outline, though partially filled up with later falls of snow, satisfactorily showed that however much they might have rambled, after crossing and doubling upon their own paths, and many a mile astray from their right track, still they must have kept together to the very plateau or shelf of rock at which their wanderings had terminated; for there were evidently no steps from this plateau in the retrograde order.

By the time they had reached this final stage of their erroneous course, all possibility of escape must have been long over for both alike; because their exhaustion must have been excessive before they could have reached a point so remote and high; and, unfortunately, the direct result of all this exhaustion had been to throw them farther off their home, or from '*any* dwelling-place of man,' than they were at starting. Here, therefore, at this rocky pinnacle, hope was extinct for either party. But it was the impression of the vale, that, perhaps within half an hour before reaching this fatal point, George Green might, had his conscience or his heart allowed him in so base a desertion, have saved himself singly, without any very great difficulty. It is to be hoped, however — and, for my part, I think too well of human nature to hesitate in believing

— that not many, even amongst the meaner-minded and the least generous of men, could have reconciled themselves to the abandonment of a poor fainting female companion in such circumstances. Still, though not more than a most imperative duty, it was one (I repeat) which most of his associates believed to have cost him (perhaps consciously) his life. For his wife not only must have disabled him greatly by clinging to his arm for support; but it was known, from her peculiar character and manner, that she would be likely to rob him of his coolness and presence of mind by too painfully fixing his thoughts, where her own would be busiest, upon their helpless little family. '*Stung* with the thoughts of home' — to borrow the fine expression of Thomson in describing a similar case — alternately thinking of the blessedness of that warm fireside at Blentarn Ghyll, which was not again to spread its genial glow through her freezing limbs, and of those darling little faces which, in this world, she was to see no more; unintentionally, and without being aware even of that result, she would rob the brave man (for such he was) of his fortitude, and the strong man of his *animal* resources. And yet — (such, in the very opposite direction, was equally the impression universally through Grasmere) — had Sarah Green foreseen, could her affectionate heart have guessed even the tenth part of that love and neighborly respect for herself, which soon afterwards expressed themselves in showers of bounty to her children; could she have looked behind the curtain of destiny sufficiently to learn that the very desolation of these poor children which wrung her maternal heart, and doubtless constituted to her the sting of death, would prove the signal and the pledge of such anxious guardianship as not many rich men's children receive, and that this overflowing offering to her own memory would not be a hasty or

decaying tribute of the first sorrowing sensibilities, but would pursue her children steadily until their hopeful settlement in life — or anything approaching this, to have known or have guessed, would have caused her (as all said who knew her) to welcome the bitter end by which such privileges were to be purchased.

The funeral of the ill-fated Greens was, it may be supposed, attended by all the vale: it took place about eight days after they were found; and the day happened to be in the most perfect contrast to the sort of weather which prevailed at the time of their misfortune; some snow still remained here and there upon the ground: but the azure of the sky was unstained by a cloud; and a golden sunlight seemed to sleep, so balmy and tranquil was the season, upon the very hills where they had wandered — then a howling wilderness, but now a green pastoral lawn, in its lower ranges, and a glittering expanse, smooth, apparently, and not difficult to the footing, of virgin snow, in its higher. George Green had, I believe, an elder family by a former wife; and it was for some of these children, who lived at a distance, and who wished to give their attendance at the grave, that the funeral was delayed. After this solemn ceremony was over — at which, by the way, I then heard Miss Wordsworth say that the grief of Sarah's illegitimate daughter was the most overwhelming she had ever witnessed — a regular distribution of the children was made amongst the wealthier families of the vale. There had already, and before the funeral, been a perfect struggle to obtain one of the children, amongst all who had any facilities for discharging the duties of such a trust; and even the poorest had put in their claim to bear some part in the expenses of the case. But it was judiciously decided, that none of the children should be entrusted to any persons who seemed likely, either from old age, or from

slender means, or from nearer and more personal responsibilities, to be under the necessity of devolving the trust, sooner or later, upon strangers, who might have none of that interest in the children which attached, in their minds, the Grasmere people to the circumstances that made them orphans. Two twins, who had naturally played together and slept together from their birth, passed into the same family: the others were dispersed; but into such kind-hearted and intelligent families, with continued opportunities of meeting each other on errands, or at church, or at sales, that it was hard to say which had the happier fate. And thus in so brief a period as one fortnight, a household that, by health and strength, by the humility of poverty, and by innocence of life, seemed sheltered from all attacks but those of time, came to be utterly broken up. George and Sarah Green slept in Grasmere churchyard, never more to know the want of 'sun or guiding star.' Their children were scattered over wealthier houses than those of their poor parents, through the vales of Grasmere or Rydal; and Blentarn Ghyll, after being shut up for a season, and ceasing for months to send up its little slender column of smoke at morning and evening, finally passed into the hands of a stranger.

The Wordsworths, meantime, were so much interested in the future fortunes and the suitable education of the children — feeling, no doubt, that, when both parents, in any little sequestered community, such as that of Grasmere, are suddenly cut off by a tragical death, the children, in such a case, become, in all reason and natural humanity, a bequest to the other members of that community — that they energetically applied themselves to the task of raising funds by subscription; most of which, it is true, might not be wanted until future years should carry one after another of the children successively into

different trades or occupation; but they well understood, that more, by tenfold, would be raised under an immediate appeal to the sympathies of men, whilst yet burning fervently towards the sufferers in this calamity, than if the application were delayed until the money should be needed. I have mentioned that the Royal Family were made acquainted with the details of the case; that they were powerfully affected by the story, especially by the account of little Agnes, and her premature assumption of the maternal character; and that they contributed most munificently. For my part, I could have obtained a good deal from the careless liberality of Oxonian friends towards such a fund. But finding, or rather knowing previously how little, in such an application, it would aid me to plead the name of Wordsworth as the mover of the subscription, (a name that *now* would stand good for some thousands of pounds in that same Oxford — so passes the injustice as well as the glory of this world!) — knowing this, I did not choose to trouble anybody; and the more so as Miss Wordsworth, upon my proposal to write to various ladies, upon whom I knew that I could rely for their several contributions, wrote back to me, desiring that I would not; and upon this satisfactory reason — that the fund had already swelled under the Royal patronage, and the interest excited by so much of the circumstances as could be reported in hurried letters, to an amount beyond what was likely to be wanted for persons whom there was no good reason for pushing out of the sphere to which their birth had called them. The parish even was liable to give aid; and, in the midst of Royal bounty, this was not declined. Finally, to complete their own large share in the charity, the Wordsworths took into their own family one of the children, a girl, Sarah by name; — the least amiable, I believe, of the whole; so, at least, I imagined:

for this girl it was, and her criminal negligence, that in years to come inflicted the first heavy wound that I sustained in my affections, and first caused me to drink deeply from the cup of grief.

In taking leave of this subject, I may mention, by the way, that accidents of this nature are not by any means so uncommon, in the mountainous districts of Cumberland and Westmoreland, as the reader might infer from the intensity of the excitement which waited on the catastrophe of the Greens. In that instance, it was not the simple death by cold upon the hills, but the surrounding circumstances, which invested the case with its agitating power: the fellowship in death of a wife and husband; the general impression that the husband had perished in his generous devotion to his wife, (a duty certainly, and no more than a duty, but still, under the instincts of self-preservation, a generous duty;) sympathy with their long agony, as expressed by their long ramblings, and the earnestness of their efforts to recover their home; awe for the long concealment which rested upon their fate; and pity for the helpless condition of the children, so young, and so instantaneously made desolate, and so nearly perishing through the loneliness of their situation, co-operating with stress of weather, had they not been saved by the prudence and timely exertions of a little girl, not much above eight years old; — these were the circumstances and accessary adjuncts of the story which pointed and sharpened the public feelings on that occasion. Else the mere general case of perishing upon the mountains is not, unfortunately, so rare, in *any* season of the year, as, for itself alone, to command a powerful tribute of sorrow from the public mind. Natives as well as strangers, shepherds as well as tourists, have fallen victims, even in summer, to the misleading and confounding effects of deep mists. Sometimes they

have continued for days to wander unconsciously in a small circle of two or three miles, never coming within hail of a human dwelling, until exhaustion has forced them into a sleep which has proved their last. Sometimes a sprain or injury, that disabled a foot or a leg, has destined them to die by the shocking death of hunger.* Sometimes

* The case of Mr. Gough, who perished in the bosom of Helvellyn, and was supposed by some to have been disabled by a sprain of the ankle, whilst others believed him to have received that injury and his death simultaneously, in a fall from the lower shelf of a precipice, became well known to the public, in all its details, from the accident of having been recorded in verse by two writers nearly at the same time — by Sir Walter Scott, and by Wordsworth. But here, again, as in the case of the Greens, it was not the naked fact of his death amongst the solitudes of the mountains that would have won the public attention, or have obtained the honor of a metrical commemoration — indeed, to say the truth, the general sympathy with this tragic event was not derived chiefly from the unhappy tourist's melancholy end, for that was too shocking to be even hinted at by either of the two writers, (in fact, there was too much reason to fear that it had been the lingering death of famine) — not the personal sufferings of the principal figure in the little drama — but the sublime and mysterious fidelity of the secondary figure, his dog; this it was which won the imperishable remembrance of the vales, and which accounted for the profound interest that immediately gathered round the incidents — an interest that still continues to hallow the memory of the dog. Not the dog of Athens, nor the dog of Pompeii, so well deserve the immortality of history or verse. Mr. Gough was a young man, belonging to the Society of 'Friends,' who took an interest in the mountain scenery of the lake district, both as a lover of the picturesque, and as a man of science. It was in this latter character, I believe, that he had ascended Helvellyn at the time when he met his melancholy end. From his local familiarity with the ground — for he had been an annual visitant to the lakes — he slighted the usual precaution of taking a guide; and, probably, under any clear state of the atmosphere, he might have found the attendance of such a person a superfluous restraint upon the freedom of his motions, and of his solitary thoughts. Mist, unfortunately — impenetrable

a fall from the summit of awful precipices has dismissed them from the anguish of perplexity in the extreme, from

volumes of mist — came floating over (as so often they do) from the gloomy falls that compose a common centre for Easedale, Langdale, Eskdale, Borrowdale, Wastdale, Gatesgarthdale, (pronounced Keskadale,) and Ennesdale. Ten or fifteen minutes afford ample time for this aerial navigation . within that short interval, sunlight, moonlight, starlight, alike disappear; all paths are lost; vast precipices are concealed, or filled up by treacherous draperies of vapor; the points of the compass are irrecoverably confounded; and one vast cloud, too often the cloud of death even to the experienced shepherd, sits like a vast pavilion upon the summits and the gloomy coves of Helvellyn. Mr. Gough ought to have allowed for this not unfrequent accident, and for its bewildering effects, under which all local knowledge (even that of shepherds) becomes in an instant unavailing. What was the course and succession of his dismal adventures, after he became hidden from the world by the vapory screen, could not be ever deciphered even by the most sagacious of mountaineers, although, in most cases, they manifest an Indian truth of eye, together with an Indian felicity of weaving all the signs that the eye can gather into a significant tale, by connecting links of judgment and natural inference, especially where the whole case ranges within certain known limits of time and of space; but in this case two accidents forbade the application of their customary skill to the circumstances. One was, the want of snow at the time, to receive the impression of his feet; the other, the unusual length of time through which his remains lay undiscovered He had made the ascent at the latter end of October — a season when the final garment of snow, which clothes Helvellyn from the setting in of winter to the sunny days of June, has frequently not made its appearance. He was not discovered until the following spring, when a shepherd, traversing the coves of Helvellyn or of Fairfield in quest of a stray sheep, was struck by the unusual sound (and its echo from the neighboring rocks) of a short, quick bark, or cry of distress, as if from a dog or young fox. Mr. Gough had not been missed : for those who saw or knew of his ascent from the Wyburn side of the mountain, took it for granted that he had fulfilled his intention of descending in the opposite direction into the valley of Patterdale, or into the Duke of Norfolk's deer-park on Ulleswater, or possibly into Matterdale; and tha

the conflicts of hope and fear, and in the same moment perhaps from life. Sometimes, also, the mountainous solitudes have been made the scenes of remarkable suicides: in particular, there was a case, a little before I came into the country, of a studious and meditative young boy, who found no pleasure but in books, and the search after knowledge. He languished, with a sort of despairing nympholepsy, after intellectual pleasures — for which he felt too well assured that *his* term of allotted time, the short period of years through which his relatives had been willing to support him at St. Bees, was rapidly drawing to an end. In fact, it was just at hand; and he was sternly required to take a long farewell of the poets and geometricians for whose sublime contemplations he hungered and thirsted. One week was to have transferred him to some huxtering concern, which not in any spirit of pride he ever affected to despise, but which in utter alienation of heart he loathed — as one whom nature, and his own

he had finally quitted the country by way of Penrith. Having no reason, therefore, to expect a domestic animal in a region so far from human habitations, the shepherd was the more surprised at the sound, and its continued iteration. He followed its guiding, and came to a deep hollow, near the awful curtain of rock called *Striding-Edge*. There, at the foot of a tremendous precipice, lay the body of the unfortunate tourist; and, watching by his side, a meagre shadow, literally reduced to a skin and to bones that could be counted, (for it is a matter of absolute demonstration that he never could have obtained either food or shelter through his long winter's imprisonment,) sate this most faithful of servants — mounting guard upon his master's honored body, and protecting it (as he *had* done effectually) from all violation by the birds of prey which haunt the central solitudes of Helvellyn: —

> 'How nourish'd through that length of time
> *He* knows — who gave that love sublime,
> And sense of loyal duty — great
> Beyond all human estimate.'

diligent cultivation of the opportunities recently open to him for a brief season, had dedicated to another yoke. He mused — revolved his situation in his own mind — computed his power to liberate himself from the bondage of dependency — calculated the chances of his ever obtaining this liberation, from change in the position of his family, or revolution in his fortunes — and, finally, attempted conjecturally to determine the amount of effect which his new and illiberal employments might have upon his own mind in weaning him from his present elevated tasks, and unfitting him for their enjoyment in distant years, when circumstances might again place it in his power to indulge them.

These meditations were, in part, communicated to a friend; and in part, also, the result to which they brought him. That this result was gloomy, his friend knew; but not, as in the end it appeared, that it was despairing. Such, however, it was: and, accordingly, having satisfied himself that the chances of a happier destiny were for him slight or none — and having, by a last fruitless effort, ascertained that there was no hope whatever of mollifying his relatives, or of obtaining a year's delay of his sentence — he walked quietly up to the cloudy wilderness within Blencathara; read his Æschylus, (perhaps in those appropriate scenes of the Prometheus, that pass amidst the wild valleys of the Caucasus, and below the awful summits, untrod by man, of the ancient Elborus;) read him for the last time; for the last time fathomed the abyss-like subtilties of his favorite geometrician, the mighty Apollonius; for the last time retraced some parts of the narrative, so simple in its natural grandeur, composed by that imperial captain, the most majestic man of ancient history —

'The foremost man of all this world,'

in the confession of his enemies — the first of the Cæsars.

These three authors — Æschylus, Apollonius, and Cæsar — he studied until the daylight waned, and the stars began to appear. Then he made a little pile of the three volumes that served him for a pillow; took a dose, such as he had heard would be sufficient, of laudanum; laid his head upon the records of the three mighty spirits of elder times; and, with his face upturned to the heavens and the stars, slipped quietly away into a sleep upon which no morning ever dawned. The laudanum — whether it were from the effect of the open air, or from some peculiarity of temperament — had not produced sickness in the first stage of its action, nor convulsions in the last. But from the serenity of his countenance, and from the tranquil maintenance of his original supine position — for his head was still pillowed upon the three intellectual Titans, Greek, and Roman, and his eyes were still directed towards the stars — it would appear that he had died placidly, and without a struggle. In this way, the imprudent boy, who, like Chatterton, would not wait for the change that a day might bring, obtained the liberty he sought; and whatsoever, in his last scene of life, was not explained by the objects and the arrangement of the objects about him, found a sufficient solution in previous conversations with various acquaintances, and in his confidential explanations of his purposes, which he had communicated, so far as he felt it safe, to his only friend.[7]

Reverting, however, from this little episode to the more ordinary case of shepherds, whose duties, in searching after missing sheep, or after sheep surprised by sudden snow-drifts, are too likely, in all seasons of severity, to bring them within reach of dangers which, in relation to their natural causes, must probably for ever remain the same; and it seems the more surprising, and the more to be deplored, that no effort has been made, or at least none

commensurate to the evil — none upon a scale that can be called *national* — to apply the resources of art and human contrivance, in any one of many possible modes, to the relief of a case which, in some years, has gone near to the depopulation of a whole pastoral hamlet, as respects the most vigorous and hopeful part of its male population; and which annually causes, by its mere contemplation, the heartache to many a young wife, and many an anxious mother. In reality, amongst all pastoral districts, where the field of their labor lies in mountainous tracts, an allowance is as regularly made for the loss of human life, in severe autumns or springs — by accidents, owing to mists or storms suddenly enveloping the hills, and surprising the shepherds — as for the loss of sheep: some proportion out of each class is considered as a kind of tithe-offering to the stern goddess of calamity, and in the light of a ransom for those who escape. Grahame, the excellent author of the 'Sabbath,' says that (confining himself to Scotland) he has known winters in which a single parish lost as many as ten shepherds. And this mention of Grahame reminds me of a most useful and feasible plan proposed by him for obviating the main pressure of such situations, amidst snow and solitude, and night. I call it feasible with good reason; for Grahame, who doubtless has made the calculations, declares that, for so trifling a sum as a few hundred pounds, every square mile in the southern counties of Scotland, (that is, I presume, throughout the Lowlands,) might be fitted up with his apparatus; and, when that sum is compared with the lavish expenditure upon lifeboats, it will appear trivial indeed. He prefaces his plan by one general remark, to which I believe that every mountaineer will assent, viz. that the vast majority of deaths in such cases is owing to the waste of animal power in trying to recover the right direction; and

probably, it *would* be recovered in a far greater number of instances, were the advance persisted in according to any unity of plan: but partly the distraction of mind and irresolution, under such circumstances, cause the wanderer frequently to change his direction voluntarily, according to any new fancy that starts up to beguile him; and partly, he changes it often insensibly and unconsciously, from the same cause which originally led him astray. Obviously, therefore, the primary object should be, to compensate the loss of distinct vision — which, for the present, is irreparable in that form — by substituting an appeal to another sense. That error which has been caused by the obstruction of the eye, may be corrected by the sounder information of the ear. Let crosses, such as are raised for other purposes in Catholic lands, be planted at intervals, suppose of one mile, in every direction. 'Snow storms,' says Grahame, 'are almost always accompanied with wind. Suppose, then, a pole, fifteen feet high, well fixed in the ground, with two cross spars placed near the bottom, to denote the airts, (or points of the compass;) a bell hung at the top of this pole, with a piece of flat wood (attached to it) projecting upwards, would ring with the slightest breeze. As they would be purposely made to have different tones, the shepherd would soon be able to distinguish one from another. He could never be more than a mile from one or other of them. On coming to the spot, he would at once know the points of the compass, and of course, the direction in which his home lay.' This is part of the note attached to the 'Winter Sabbath Walk,' and particularly referring to the following picturesque passages: —

'Now is the time
To visit Nature in her grand attire;
Though perilous the mountainous ascent,
A noble recompense the danger brings.

How beautiful the plain stretch'd far below!
Unvaried though it be, save by yon stream
With azure windings, or the leafless wood.
But what the beauty of the plain compar'd
To that sublimity which reigns enthron'd,
Holding joint rule with solitude divine,
Among yon rocky fells that bid defiance
To steps the most adventurously bold?
There silence dwells profound; or, if the cry
Of high-pois'd eagle break at times the calm,
The mantled echoes no response return.

But let me now explore the deep-sunk dell.
No foot-print, save the covey's or the flock's,
Is seen along the rill, where marshy springs
Still rear the grassy blade of vivid green.
Beware, ye shepherds, of these treacherous haunts;
Nor linger there too long: the wintry day
Soon closes; and full oft a heavier fall,
Heaped by the blast, fills up the shelter'd glen,
While, gurgling deep below, the buried rill
Mines for itself a snow-covered way. O then
Your helpless charge drive from the tempting spot;
And keep them on the bleak hill's stormy side,
Where night-winds sweep the gathering drift away.'

A more useful suggestion was never made. Many thousands of lives would be saved in each century by the general adoption of Mr. Grahame's plan; and two or three further hints may be added. 1. Before these crosses can be sown as plentifully as he proposes, it will, in a large majority of cases, answer the same end, to make such an approximation to his plan as would not cost, perhaps, more than one quarter of the first expense, viz. by placing the crosses at such distances that the bell might make itself heard: suppose the intervals to be four miles, then the greatest *possible* distance from the sound would be two miles; and so far a bell might send its sound upon the breeze, for there will be always some of these crosses to

windward. 2. They might be made of cast-iron — as one means of ensuring their preservation. 3. There might be a box, or little cell attached, capable of receiving one person; this should be suspended at a height, suppose of eight feet, from the ground; and the entrance should be by a little ladder leading into the box through an orifice from below; which orifice should be covered by a little door or lid — one that should open inwards when pressed by the head of the ascending person. Finally, in a country where mile-stones and guide-posts are often wantonly mutilated or destroyed, it may be thought that these crosses would not long be in a condition to do their office; in particular, that the bells would be detached and carried off. But it should be remembered, that even mile-stones on the most public roads have ceased to be injured since they have been made of iron; that these crosses never would be in a populous region, but exactly in the most solitary places of the island; and that in any case where they ceased to be solitary, *there* the crosses would cease to be necessary.

Another protecting circumstance would rise out of the simplicity of manners, which is pretty sure to prevail in a mountainous region, and the pious tenderness universally felt towards those situations of peril, which are incident to all alike — men and women, parents and children, the strong and the weak. The crosses, I would answer for it, whenever they are erected, will be protected by a superstition such as that which in Holland consecrates the loss of a stork, and in most countries of some animal or other. But it would be right to strengthen this feeling, by instilling it as a principle of duty, in the catechisms of mountainous regions: and, perhaps, also, to invest this duty with a religious sanctity, at the approach of every winter there might be read from the altar a solemn com-

mination, such as that which the English Church appoints for Ash-Wednesday — 'Cursed is he that removeth his neighbor's landmark,' &c., &c., to which might now be added — 'Cursed is he that causeth the steps of the wayfarer to go astray, and layeth snares for the belated traveller in the wilderness; cursed is he that removeth the bell from the snow-cross.' And every child might learn to fear a judgment of retribution upon its own steps in case of any such wicked action, by reading the tale of him, who, in order

'To plague the Abbot of Aberbrothock,'

removed the bell from the Inchcape rock; which same rock, in after days, and for want of this very warning bell, inflicted miserable ruin upon himself, his ship, and his unoffending crew. Warning sentences should also be inscribed upon all the four faces of the little cell, that nobody might offend in a spirit of jest or forgetfulness; and as the century advanced, a memorial list, (like the Roman *votive tablets*, suspended on the walls of temples,) should be firmly attached to the cross, of all who had benefited by its shelter. The mere fact of having ascended the ladder, being taken as sufficient evidence that a sanctuary had been found necessary. The sanctity of the place might, in one generation, be so far improved as to protect a small supply of brandy and biscuit, to be lodged there on the coming of winter. If a few rockets, and some apparatus for lighting a match were also left accessible in some of the remoter solitudes, the storm-bound and exhausted wanderer would, besides recruiting his strength, find it possible to telegraph his situation to some one of the neighboring valleys. Once made sacred from violation, these crosses might afterwards be made subjects of suitable ornament; that is to say,

they might be made as picturesque in form, and color, and material, as the crosses of Alpine countries, or the guide-posts of England often are. The associated circumstances of storm and solitude, of winter, of night, and wayfaring, would give dignity to almost any form which had become familiar to the eye as the one appropriated to this purpose; and the particular form of a cross or crucifix, besides its own beauty, would suggest to the mind a pensive allegoric memorial of that spiritual asylum, offered by the same emblem to the poor erring roamer in our human pilgrimage, whose steps are beset with other snares, and whose heart is made anxious by another darkness, and another storm — the darkness of guilt, or the storm of affliction. If iron was found too costly, it might be used only for the little cell; and the rest of the structure might be composed with no expense at all, except the labor, (and that would generally be given by public contribution of the neighborhood,) from the rude undressed stones which are always found lying about in such situations, and which are so sufficient for all purposes of strength, that the field-walls, and by far the greater number of the dwelling-houses in Westmoreland, are built of such materials, and, until late years, without mortar.* But, whatever were the materials, the name of these rural guides and asylums — 'storm-crosses' — would

* This recent change in the art of rustic masonry by the adoption of mortar, does not mark any advance in that art, but, on the contrary, a decay of skill and care. Twenty years ago, when 'dry' walls were in general use except for a superior class of houses, it was necessary to supply the want of mortar by a much nicer adaptation of the stones to each other. But now this care is regarded as quite superfluous; for the largest gaps and cavities amongst the stones are filled up with mortar; meantime, the walls built in this way are not so impervious either to rain or wind as those upon the old patent construction of the past generation.

continually remind both the natives and strangers of their purpose and functions — functions that, in the process of time, would make them as interesting to the imagination and to the memory, as they would, in fact, be useful and hope-sustaining to the shepherd surprised by snow, and the traveller surprised by night.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SARACEN'S HEAD.

My first visit to the Wordsworths had been made in November, 1807; but, on that occasion, from the necessity of saving the Michaelmas Term at Oxford, for which I had barely left myself time, I stayed only one week. On the last day, I witnessed a scene, the first and the last of its kind that ever I *did* witness, almost too trivial to mention, except for the sake of showing what things occur in the realities of experience, which a novelist could not venture to imagine. Wordsworth and his sister were under an engagement of some standing to dine on that day with a literary lady about four miles distant; and, as the southern mail, which I was to catch at a distance of eighteen miles, would not pass that point until long after midnight, Miss Wordsworth proposed that, rather than pass my time at an inn, I should join the dinner party; a proposal rather more suitable to her own fervent and hospitable temper, than to the habits of our hostess, who must (from what I came to know of her in after years) have looked upon me as an intruder. Something *had* reached Miss Wordsworth of her penurious *ménage*, but nothing that approached the truth. I was presented to the lady, whom we found a perfect *bas bleu* of a very commonplace order, but having some other accomplishments beyond her slender acquaintance with literature.

Our party consisted of six — our hostess, who might be about fifty years of age; a pretty timid young woman, who was there in the character of a humble friend; some stranger or other; the Wordsworths, and myself. The dinner was the very humblest and simplest I had ever seen — in that there was nothing to offend — I did not then know that the lady was very rich — but also it was flagrantly insufficient in quantity. Dinner, however, proceeded; when, without any removals, in came a kind of second course, in the shape of a solitary pheasant. This, in a cold manner, she asked me to try; but we, in our humility, declined for the present; and also in mere good-nature, not wishing to expose too palpably the insufficiency of her dinner. May I die the death of a traitor, if she did not proceed, without further question to any one of us, (and as to the poor young companion, no form of even invitation was conceded to her,) and, in the eyes of us all, ate up the whole bird, from alpha to omega. Upon my honor, I thought to myself, this is a scene I would not have missed. It is well to know the possibilities of human nature. Could she have a bet depending on the issue, and would she explain all to us as soon as she had won her wager? Alas! no explanation ever came, except, indeed, that afterwards her character, put *en evidence* upon a score of occasions, too satisfactorily explained everything. No; it was, as Mr. Coleridge expresses it, a psychological curiosity — a hollow thing — and only once matched in all the course of my reading, in or out of romances; but that once, I grieve to say it, was by a king, and a sort of hero.

The Duchess of Marlborough it is, who reports the shocking anecdote of William III., that actually Princess Anne, his future wife, durst not take any of the green peas brought to the dinner table, when that vegetable

happened to be as yet scarce and premature. *There* was a gentleman! And such a lady had we for our hostess. However, we all observed a suitable gravity; but afterwards, when we left the house, the remembrance affected us differently; Miss Wordsworth laughed with undissembled glee; but Wordsworth thought it too grave a matter for laughing — he was thoroughly disgusted; and said repeatedly, a person cannot be honest, positively not honest, who is capable of such an act. The lady is dead, and I shall not mention her name: she lived only to gratify her selfish propensities; and two little anecdotes may show the outrageous character of her meanness. I was now on the debtor side of her dinner account, and, therefore, in a future year she readily accepted an invitation to come and dine with me at my cottage. But, on a subsequent occasion, when I was to have a few literary people at dinner, whom I knew that she greatly wished to meet, she positively replied thus: — 'No; I have already come with my young lady to dine with you; that puts me on the wrong side by one; now if I were to come again, as I cannot leave Miss —— behind, I shall then be on the wrong side by three; and that is more than I could find opportunities to repay before I go up to London for the winter.' 'Very well,' I said, 'give me 3*s*. and *that* will settle the account.' She laughed, but positively persisted in not coming until after dinner, notwithstanding she had to drive a distance of ten miles.

The other anecdote is worse. She was exceedingly careful of her health; and not thinking it healthy to drive about in a close carriage, which, besides, could not have suited the narrow mountain tracks, to which her sketching habits attracted her, she shut up her town carriage for the summer, and jobbed some little open car. Being a very large woman, and, moreover, a masculine woman, with

a bronzed complexion, and always choosing to wear, at night, a turban, round hair that was as black as that of the 'Moors of Malabar,' she presented an exact likeness of a Saracen's Head, as painted over inn-doors; whilst the timid and delicate young lady by her side, looked like 'dejected Pity' at the side of 'Revenge,' when assuming the war-denouncing trumpet. Some Oxonians and Cantabs, who, at different times, were in the habit of meeting this oddly assorted party in all nooks of the country, used to move the question, whether the poor horse or the young lady had the worst of it? At length the matter was decided: the horse was fast going off this sublunary stage; and the Saracen's Head was told as much, and with this little addition; — that his death was owing *inter alia* to starvation. Her answer was remarkable: — 'But, my dear madam, that is his master's fault; I pay so much a-day — he is to keep the horse.' That might be, but still the horse was dying — and dying in the way stated. The Saracen's Head persisted in using him under those circumstances — such was her 'bond' — and in a short time the horse actually died. Yes, the horse died — and died of starvation — or at least of an illness caused originally by starvation: for so said, not merely the whole population of the little neighboring town, but also the surgeon. Not long after, however, the lady, the Saracen's Head, died herself; but I fear *not* of starvation; for, though something like it did prevail at her table, she prudently reserved it all for her guests; in fact, I never heard of such vigilant care, and so much laudable exertion, applied to the promotion of health: yet all failed, and, in a degree which confounded people's speculations upon the subject — for she did not live much beyond sixty; whereas everybody supposed that the management of her physical system entitled her

to outwear a century. Perhaps the prayers of horses might avail to order it otherwise.

But the singular thing about this lady's mixed and contradictory character, was, that in London and Bath, where her peculiar habits of life were naturally less accurately known, she maintained the reputation of one who united the accomplishments of literature and art with a remarkable depth of sensibility, and a most amiable readiness to enter into the distresses of her friends, by sympathy the most cordial, and consolation the most delicate. More than once I have seen her name recorded in printed books, and attended with praises that tended to this effect. I have seen letters also, from a lady in deep affliction which spoke of the Saracen's Head as having paid her the first visit from which she drew any effectual consolation. Such are the erroneous impressions conveyed by biographical memoirs; or, which is a more charitable construction of the case, such are the inconsistencies of the human heart! And certainly there was one fact, even in her Westmoreland life, that *did* lend some countenance to the southern picture of her amiableness: and this lay in the cheerfulness with which she gave up her time (*time*, but not much of her redundant money) to the promotion of the charitable schemes set on foot by the neighboring ladies; sometimes for the education of poor children, sometimes for the visiting of the sick, &c., &c. I have heard several of those ladies express their gratitude for her exertions, and declare that she was about their best member. But their horror was undisguised when the weekly committee came, by rotation, to hold its sittings at her little villa; for, as the business occupied them frequently from eleven o'clock in the forenoon to a late dinner hour, and as many of them had a fifteen or twenty miles' drive, they needed some refreshments: but these were, of course, a 'great idea'

at the Saracen's Head; since, according to the epigram which illustrates the maxim of Tacitus, that *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, and, applying it to the case of a miser's horse, terminates by saying, 'What vast ideas must he have of oats!' — upon the same principle these poor ladies, on these fatal committee days, never failed to form most exaggerated ideas of bread, butter, and wine. And at length, some, more intrepid than the rest, began to carry biscuits in their muffs, and, with the conscious tremors of school girls, (profiting by the absence of the mistress but momentarily expecting detection,) they employed some casual absence of their unhostly hostess in distributing and eating their hidden 'viaticum.' However it must be acknowledged, that time and exertion, and the sacrifice of more selfish pleasure during the penance at the school, were, after all, real indications of kindness to her fellow-creatures; and, as I wish to part in peace, even with the Saracen's Head, I have reserved this anecdote to the last: for it is painful to have lived on terms of good nature, and exchanging civilities, with any human being, of whom one can report absolutely *no* good thing; and I sympathize heartily with that indulgent person of whom it is somewhere recorded, that upon an occasion when the death of a man happened to be mentioned, who was unanimously pronounced a wretch without one good quality, '*monstrum nullâ virtute redemptum*,' he ventured, however, at last, in a deprecatory tone to say — 'Well, he did *whistle* beautifully, at any rate.'

Talking of 'whistling,' reminds me to return from my digression; for on that night, the 12th of November, 1807, and the last of my visits to the Wordsworths, I took leave of them in the inn at Ambleside, about ten at night; and the post-chaise in which I crossed the country to catch the mail, was driven by a postilion who whistled so

delightfully, that, for the first time in my life, I became aware of the prodigious powers which are lodged potentially in so despised a function of the vocal organs. For the whole of the long ascent up Orrest Head, which obliged him to walk his horses for a full half-mile, he made the woods of Windermere ring with the canorous sweetness of his half flute, half clarionet music; but, in fact, the subtle melody of the effect placed it in power far beyond either flute or clarionet. A year or two afterwards, I heard a fellow-servant of this same postilion's, a black, play with equal superiority of effect upon the jew's harp; making that, which in most hands is a mere monotonous jarring, a dull reverberating vibration, into a delightful lyre of no inconsiderable compass. We have since heard of, some of us have heard, the chinchopper. Within the last hundred years, we have had the Æolian harp, (first mentioned and described in the 'Castle of Indolence,' which I think was first published entire about 1738;) then the musical glasses; then the *celestina*, to represent the music of the spheres, introduced by Mr. Walker, or some other lecturing astronomer; and many another fine effect obtained from trivial means. But, at this moment, I recollect a performance perhaps more astonishing than any of them; a Mr. Worgman, who had very good introductions, and very general ones, (for he was to be met within a few months in every part of the island,) used to accompany himself on the piano, weaving *extempore* long tissues of impassioned music, that were called his own, but which, in fact, were all the better for not being such, or at least for continually embodying passages from Handel and Pergolesi. To this substratum of the instrumental music, he contrived to adapt some unaccountable and indescribable choral accompaniment, a pomp of sound, a tempestuous blare of harmony ascending

in clouds not from any one, but apparently from a band of Mr. Worgman's; for sometimes it was a trumpet, sometimes a kettle-drum, sometimes a cymbal, sometimes a bassoon, and sometimes it was all of these at once.

> 'And now 'twas like all instruments;
> And now it was a flute;
> And now it was an angel's voice,
> That maketh the heavens be mute.'

In this case, I presume, that ventriloquism must have had something to do with the effect; but whatever it were, the power varied greatly with the state of his spirits, or with some other fluctuating causes in the animal economy. However, the result of all these experiences is, that I shall never more be surprised at any musical effects, the very greatest, drawn from whatever inconsiderable or apparently inadequate means; not even if the butcher's instrument, the marrow-bones and cleaver, or any of those culinary instruments so pleasantly treated by Addison in the 'Spectator,' such as the kitchen dresser and thumb, the tongs and shovel, the pepper and salt-box, should be exalted, by some immortal butcher or inspired scullion, into a sublime harp, dulcimer, or lute, capable of wooing St. Cecilia to listen, able even

> 'To raise a mortal to the skies,
> Or draw an angel down.'

That night, as I was passing under the grounds of Elleray, then belonging to a Westmoreland 'statesman,' a thought struck me, that I was now traversing a road with which, as yet, I was scarcely at all acquainted, but which, in years to come, might perhaps be as familiar to my eye as the rooms of my own house; and possibly that I might traverse them in company with faces as yet not even seen by me, but in those future years dearer than

any which I had yet known, In this prophetic glimpse there was nothing very marvellous; for what could be more natural than that I should come to reside in the neighborhood of the Wordsworths, and that this might lead to my forming connections in a country which I should consequently come to know so well? I did not, however, anticipate so definitely and circumstantially as all this; but generally I had a dim presentiment that here, on this very road, I should often pass, and in company that now, not even conjecturally delineated or drawn out of the utter darkness in which they were as yet reposing, would hereafter plant memories in my heart, the last that will fade from it in the hour of death. Here, afterwards, at this very spot, or a little above it, but on this very estate, which form local peculiarities of ground, and of sudden angles, was peculiarly *kenspeck*, *i. e.* easy of recognition, and could have been challenged and identified at any distance of years; here afterwards lived Professor Wilson, the only very intimate male friend I have had; here, too, it was, my M., that, in long years afterwards, through many a score of nights — nights often dark as Erebus, and amidst thunders and lightnings the most sublime — we descended at twelve, one, and two o'clock at night, speeding from Kendal to our distant home, twenty miles away. Thou wert at present a child not nine years old, nor had I seen thy face, nor heard thy name. But within nine years from that same night, thou wert seated by my side; — and, thenceforwards, through a period of fourteen years, how often did we two descend, hand locked in hand, and thinking of things to come, at a pace of hurricane; whilst all the sleeping woods about us re-echoed the uproar of trampling hoofs and groaning wheels. Duly as we mounted the crest of Orrest Head, mechanically and of themselves almost, and spontaneously,

without need of voice or spur, according to Westmoreland usage, the horses flew off into a gallop, like the pace of a swallow.* It was a railroad pace that we ever maintained; objects were descried far ahead in one moment, and in the next were crowding into the rear. Three miles and a half did this storm flight continue, for so long the descent lasted. Then, for many a mile, over undulating ground, did we ultimately creep and fly, until again a long precipitous movement, again a storm gallop, that hardly suffered the feet to touch the ground, gave warning that we drew near to that beloved cottage; warning to us — warning to them —

> ——— 'the silence that is here
> Is of the grave, and of austere
> But happy feelings of the dead.'

Sometimes the nights were bright with cloudless moonlight, and of that awful breathless quiet which often broods over vales that are peculiarly landlocked, and which is, or seems to be, so much more expressive of a solemn hush and a Sabbath-like rest from the labors of nature, than I remember to have experienced in flat countries: —

> 'It is not quiet — is not peace —
> But something deeper far than these.'

And on such nights it was no sentimental refinement, but

* It may be supposed, not literally, for the swallow, (or at least that species called the swift,) has been known to fly at the rate of 300 miles an hour. Very probably, however, this pace was not deduced from an entire hour's performance, but estimated by proportion from a flight of one or two minutes. An interesting anecdote is told by the gentleman (I believe the Rev E. Stanley) who described in *Blackwood's Magazine* the opening of the earliest English railway viz. that a bird (snipe was it, or field-fare, or plover?) ran, or rather flew, a race with the engine for three or four miles, until finding itself likely to be beaten, it then suddenly wheeled away into the moors.

a sincere and hearty feeling, that, in wheeling past the village churchyard of Stavely, something like an outrage seemed offered to the sanctity of its graves, by the uproar of our career. Sometimes the nights were of that pitchy darkness which is more palpable and unfathomable wherever hills intercept the gleaming of light which otherwise is usually seen to linger about the horizon in the northern quarter; and then arose in perfection that striking effect, when the glare of lamps searches for one moment every dark recess of the thickets, forces them into sudden, almost daylight revelation, only to leave them within the twinkling of the eye in darkness more profound; making them, like the snow-flakes falling upon a cataract, 'one moment bright, then gone for ever.' But, dark or moonlight alike, in every instance throughout so long a course of years, the road was entirely our own for the whole twenty miles. After nine o'clock, not many people are abroad; after ten, absolutely none, upon the roads of Westmoreland; a circumstance which gives a peculiar solemnity to a traveller's route amongst these quiet valleys upon a summer evening of latter May, of June, or early July; since, in a latitude so much higher than that of London, broad daylight prevails to an hour long after nine. Nowhere is the holiness of vesper hours more deeply felt. And now, in 1839, from all these flying journeys and their stinging remembrances, hardly a wreck survives of what composed their living equipage: the men who chiefly drove in those days (for I have ascertained it) are gone; the horses are gone; darkness rests upon all, except myself. I, wo is me! am the solitary survivor from scenes that now seem to me as fugitive as the flying lights from our lamps as they shot into the forest recesses. God forbid that on such a theme I should seem to affect sentimentalism. It is from overmastering recol-

lections that I look back on those distant days; and chiefly I have suffered myself to give way before the impulse that haunts me, of reverting to those bitter, bitter thoughts, in order to notice one singular waywardness or caprice (as it might seem) incident to the situation, which, I doubt not, besieges many more people than myself: it is, that I find a more poignant suffering, a pang more searching, in going back, not to those enjoyments themselves, and the days when they were within my power, but to times anterior, when as yet they did not exist; nay, when some who were chiefly concerned in them as parties, had not even been born. No night, I might almost say, of my whole life, remains so profoundly, painfully, and pathetically imprinted on my remembrance, as this very one, on which I tried prelusively, as it were, that same road in solitude, and lulled by the sweet carollings of the postilion, which, *after* an interval of ten years, and *through* a period of more than equal duration, it was destined that I should so often traverse in circumstances of happiness too radiant, that for me are burned out forever. Coleridge told me of a similar case that had fallen within his knowledge, and the impassioned expression which the feelings belonging to it drew from a servant woman at Keswick: — She had nursed some boy, either of his or of Mr. Southey's; the boy had lived apart from the rest of the family, secluded with his nurse in her cottage; she was doatingly fond of him; lived, in short, *by* him, as well as for him; and nearly ten years of her life had been exalted into one golden dream by his companionship. At length came the day which severed the connection; and she, in the anguish of the separation, bewailing her future loneliness, and knowing too well that education and the world, if it left him some kind remembrances of her, never could restore him to her arms the same fond loving

boy that felt no shame in surrendering his whole heart to caressing and being caressed, did not revert to any day or season of her ten years' happiness, but went back to the very day of his arrival, a particular Thursday, and to an hour when, as yet, she had not seen him, exclaiming — 'O that Thursday! O that it could come back! that Thursday when the chaise-wheels were ringing in the streets of Keswick; when yet I had not seen his bonny face; but when *he* was coming!'

Ay, reader, all this may sound foolishness to you, that perhaps never had a heartache, or that may have all your blessings to come. But now let me return to my narrative. After about twelve months' interval, and therefore again in November, but November of the year 1808, I repeated my visit to Wordsworth, and upon a longer scale. I found him removed from his cottage to a house of considerable size, about three-quarters of a mile distant, called Allan Bank. This house had been very recently erected, at an expense of about £1500, by a gentleman from Liverpool, a merchant, and also a lawyer in some department or other. It was not yet completely finished; and an odd accident was reported to me as having befallen it in its earliest stage. The walls had been finished, and this event was to be celebrated at the village inn with an *ovation*, previously to the *triumph* that would follow on the roof-raising. The workmen had all housed themselves at the *Red Lion*, and were beginning their carouse, when up rode a traveller, who brought them the unseasonable news, that, whilst riding along the vale, he had beheld the downfall of the whole building. Out the men rushed, hoping that this might be a hoax; but too surely they found his report true, and their own festival premature. A little malice mingled unavoidably with the laughter of the Dalesmen; for it happened that the Liverpool gentleman

had offered a sort of insult to the native artists, by bringing down both masons and carpenters from his own town, an unwise plan, for they were necessarily unacquainted with many points of local skill; and it was to some ignorance in their mode of laying the stones that the accident was due. The house had one or two capital defects — it was cold, damp, and, to all appearance, incurably smoky. Upon this latter defect, by the way, Wordsworth founded a claim, not for diminution of rent, but absolutely for entire immunity from any rent at all. It was truly comical to hear him argue the point with the Liverpool proprietor, Mr. C. He went on dilating on the hardship of living in such a house; of the injury, or suffering, at least, sustained by the eyes; until, at last, he had drawn a picture of himself as a very ill used man; and I seriously expected to hear him sum up by demanding a round sum for damages. Mr. C. was a very good-natured man, calm, and gentlemanlike in his manners. He had also a considerable respect for Wordsworth, derived, it may be supposed, not from his writings, but from the authority (which many more besides him could not resist) of his conversation. However, he looked grave and perplexed. Nor do I know how the matter ended; but I mention it as an illustration of Wordsworth's keen spirit of business. Whilst foolish people supposed him a mere honeyed sentimentalist, speaking only in zephyrs and bucolics, he was in fact a somewhat hard pursuer of what he thought fair advantages.

In the February which followed, I left Allan Bank; but upon Miss Wordsworth's happening to volunteer the task of furnishing for my use the cottage so recently occupied by her brother's family, I took it upon a seven years' lease. And thus it happened — this I mean was the mode of it, (for, at any rate, I should have settled somewhere in the country,) that I became a resident in Grasmere.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOCIETY OF THE LAKES.

In February, as I have said, of 1809, I quitted Allan Bank; and, from that time until the depth of summer, Miss Wordsworth was employed in the task she had volunteered, of renewing and furnishing the little cottage in which I was to succeed the illustrious tenant who had, in my mind, hallowed the rooms by a seven years' occupation, during perhaps, the happiest period of his life — the early years of his marriage, and of his first acquaintance with parental affections. Cottage, immortal in my remembrance! as well it might be; for this cottage I retained through just seven-and-twenty years: this was the scene of struggle the most tempestuous and bitter within my own mind: this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness: this the scene of my happiness — a happiness which justified the faith of man's *earthly* lot, as, upon the whole, a dowry from heaven. It was, in its exterior, not so much a picturesque cottage — for its outline and proportions, its windows and its chimneys, were not sufficiently marked and effective for the picturesque * — as it was lovely: one gable end was, indeed,

* The idea of the picturesque is one which did not exist at all until the post-Christian ages; neither amongst the Grecians nor amongst the Romans; and *therefore*, as respects one reason, it was, that the art of landscape painting did not exist (except in a Chinese infancy,

most gorgeously apparelled in ivy, and so far picturesque; but the principal side, or what might be called front, as it

and as a mere trick of inventive ingenuity) amongst the finest artists of Greece. What *is* picturesque, as placed in relation to the beautiful and the sublime? It is (to define it by the very shortest form of words) the characteristic, pushed into a sensible excess. The prevailing character of any natural object, no matter how little attractive it may be for beauty, is always interesting for itself, *as* the character and hieroglyphic symbol of the purposes pursued by Nature in the determination of its form, style of motion, texture of superficies, relation of parts, &c.

Thus, for example, an expression of dulness and somnolent torpor does not ally itself with grace or elegance; but, in combination with strength and other qualities, it may compose a character of serviceable and patient endurance, as in the cart-horse, having unity in itself, and tending to one class of uses sufficient to mark it out by circumscription for a distinct and separate contemplation. Now, in combination with certain counteracting circumstances, as with the momentary energy of some great effort, much of this peculiar character might be lost, or defeated, or dissipated. On that account, the skilful observer will seek out circumstances that are in harmony with the principal tendencies and assist them; such, suppose, as a state of lazy relaxation from labor, and the fall of heavy drenching rain causing the head to droop, and the shaggy mane, together with the fetlocks, to weep. These, and other circumstances of attitude, &c., bring out the character or prevailing tendency of the animal in some excess; and, in such a case, we call the resulting effect to the eye — picturesque: or in fact, *characteresque*. In extending this speculation to objects of art and human purposes, there is something more required of subtle investigation. Meantime, it is evident that neither the sublime nor the beautiful depends upon any *secondary* interest of a purpose or of a character expressing that purpose. They (confining the case to visual objects) court the *primary* interest involved in that (form, color, texture, attitude, motion), which forces admiration, which fascinates the eye, for itself, and without a question of any distinct purpose: and, instead of character — that is, discriminating and separating expression, tending to the special and the individual — they both agree in pursuing the Catholic — the Normal — the Ideal.

presented itself to the road, and was most illuminated by windows, was embossed — nay, it might be said, smothered — in roses of different species, amongst which the moss and the damask prevailed. These, together with as much jessamine and honeysuckle as could find room to flourish, were not only in themselves a most interesting garniture for a humble cottage wall, but they also performed the acceptable service of breaking the unpleasant glare that would else have wounded the eye, from the whitewash; a glare which, having been renewed amongst the general preparations against my coming to inhabit the house, could not be sufficiently subdued in tone for the artist's eye until the storm of several winters had weather-stained and tamed down its brilliancy. The Westmoreland cottages, as a class, have long been celebrated for their picturesque forms, and very justly so: in no part of the world are cottages to be found more strikingly interesting to the eye by their general outlines, by the sheltered porches of their entrances, by their exquisite chimneys, by their rustic windows, and by the distribution of the parts These parts are on a larger scale, both as to number and size, than a stranger would expect to find as dependencies and out-houses attached to dwelling-houses so modest; chiefly from the necessity of making provision, both in fuel for themselves, and in hay, straw, and brackens for the cattle against the long winter. But, in praising the Westmoreland dwellings, it must be understood that only those of the native Dalesmen are contemplated; for as to those raised by the alien intruders — 'the lakers,' or 'foreigners' as they are sometimes called by the old indigenous possessors of the soil — these being designed to exhibit 'a taste' and an eye for the picturesque, are pretty often mere models of deformity, as vulgar and as silly as it is well possible for any object to be, in a case

where, after all, the workman, and obedience to custom, and the necessities of the ground, &c., will often step in to compel the architects into common sense and propriety. The main defect in Scottish scenery, the eyesore that disfigures so many charming combinations of landscape, is the offensive style of the rural architecture; but still, even where it is worst, the *mode* of its offence is not by affectation and conceit, and preposterous attempts at realizing sublime, Gothic, or castellated effects in little gingerbread ornaments, and 'tobacco pipes,' and make-believe parapets, and towers like kitchen or hot-house flues; but in the hard undisguised pursuit of mere coarse uses and needs of life.

Too often, the rustic mansion, that should speak of decent poverty and seclusion, peaceful and comfortable, wears the most repulsive air of town confinement and squalid indigence; the house being built of substantial stone, three stories high, or even four, the roof of massy slate; and everything strong which respects the future outlay of the proprietor — everything frail which respects the comfort of the inhabitants: windows broken and stuffed up with rags or old hats; steps and door encrusted with dirt; and the whole tarnished with smoke. Poverty — how different the face it wears looking with meagre staring eyes from such a city dwelling as this, and when it peeps out, with rosy cheeks, from amongst clustering roses and woodbines, at a little lattice, from a little one-story cottage! Are, then, the main characteristics of the Westmoreland dwelling-houses imputable to superior taste? By no means. Spite of all that I have heard Mr. Wordsworth and others say in maintaining that opinion, I, for my part, do and must hold, that the Dalesmen produce none of the happy effects which frequently arise in their domestic architecture under any search after

beautiful forms, a search which they despise with a sort of Vandal dignity; no, nor with any sense or consciousness of their success. How then? Is it accident — mere casual good luck — that has brought forth, for instance, so many exquisite forms of chimneys? Not so; but it is this: it is good sense, on the one hand, bending and conforming to the dictates or even the suggestions of the climate, and the local circumstances of rocks, water, currents of air, &c.; and, on the other hand, wealth sufficient to arm the builder with all suitable means for giving effect to his purpose, and to evade the necessity of make-shifts. But the radical ground of the interest attached to Westmoreland cottage architecture, lies in its submission to the determining agencies of the surrounding circumstances; such of them, I mean, as are permanent, and have been gathered from long experience. The porch, for instance, which does so much to take away from a house the character of a rude box, pierced with holes for air, light, and ingress, has evidently been dictated by the sudden rushes of wind through the mountain 'ghylls,' which make some kind of protection necessary to the ordinary door; and this reason has been strengthened in cases of houses near to a road, by the hospitable wish to provide a sheltered seat for the wayfarer; most of these porches being furnished with one in each of the two recesses, to the right and to the left.

The long winter again, as I have already said, and the artificial prolongation of the winter, by the necessity of keeping the sheep long upon the low grounds, creates a call for large out-houses; and these, for the sake of warmth, are usually placed at right angles to the house: which the effect of making a much larger system of parts than would else arise. But perhaps the main feature, which gives character to the pile of building, is the roof,

and, above all, the chimneys. It is the remark of an accomplished Edinburgh artist, H. W. Williams, in the course of his strictures * upon the domestic architecture of the Italians, and especially of the Florentines, that the character of buildings, in certain circumstances, 'depends wholly or chiefly on the form of the roof and the chimney. This,' he goes on, 'is particularly the case in Italy, where more variety and taste is displayed in the chimneys than in the buildings to which they belong. These chimneys are as peculiar and characteristic as palm trees in a tropical climate.' Again, in speaking of Calabria and the Ionian Islands, he says — 'We were forcibly struck with the consequence which the beauty of the chimneys imparted to the character of the whole building.' Now, in Great Britain, he complains, with reason, of the very opposite result; not the plain building ennobled by the chimney; but the chimney degrading the noble building; and in Edinburgh, especially, where the homely and inelegant appearance of the chimneys contrasts most disadvantageously and offensively with the beauty of the buildings which they surmount.' Even here, however, he makes an exception for some of the *old* buildings, whose chimneys,' he admits, 'are very tastefully decorated, and contribute essentially to the beauty of the general effect.' It is probable, therefore, and many houses of the Elizabethan era confirm it, that a better taste prevailed, in this point, amongst our ancestors, both Scottish and English; that this elder fashion travelled, together with many other usages, from the richer parts of Scotland to the Borders, and thence to the vales of Westmoreland; where they have continued to prevail, from their affectionate adhesion to all patriarchal customs. Some, undoubtedly, of these

* Travels in Italy, Greece, and the Ionian Islands, vol. i. p. 74, 75

Westmoreland forms have been dictated by the necessities of the weather, and the systematic energies of human skill, from age to age, applied to the very difficult task of training smoke into obedience, under the peculiar difficulties presented by the sites of Westmoreland houses. These are chosen, generally speaking, with the same good sense and regard to domestic comfort, as the primary consideration (without, however, disdainfully slighting the sentiment, whatever it were, of peace, of seclusion, of gayety, of solemnity, the special 'religio loci') which seems to have guided the choice of those who founded religious houses.

And here, again, by the way, appears a marked difference between the Dalesmen and the intrusive gentry — not creditable to the latter. The native Dalesmen, well aware of the fury with which the wind often gathers and eddies about any eminence, however trifling its elevation, never thinks of planting his house *there:* whereas the stranger, singly solicitous about the prospect or the range of lake which his gilt saloons are to command, chooses his site too often upon points better fitted for a temple of Eolus than a human dwelling-place; and he belts his house with balconies and verandas that a mountain gale often tears away in mockery. The Dalesman, wherever his choice is not circumscribed, selects a sheltered spot, (a *wray*,* for instance,) which protects him from the wind altogether, upon one or two quarters, and on all quarters from its tornado violence: he takes good care, at the same time, to be within a few feet of a mountain beck: a caution so little heeded by some of the villa founders, that absolutely, in a country surcharged with water, they have some-

* *Wraie* is the old Danish, or Icelandic word for *angle*. Hence the many 'wrays' in the lake district.

times found themselves driven, by sheer necessity, to the after-thought of sinking a well. The very best situation, however, in other respects, may be bad in one; and sometimes find its very advantages, and the beetling crags which protect its rear, obstructions the most permanent to the ascent of smoke; and it is in the contest with these natural baffling repellents of the smoke, and in the variety of artifices for modifying its vertical, or for accomplishing its lateral escape, that have arisen the large and graceful variety of chimney models. My cottage, wanting this primary feature of elegance in the constituents of Westmoreland cottage architecture, and wanting also another very interesting feature of the elder architecture, annually becoming more and more rare, viz. the outside gallery, (which is sometimes merely of wood, but is much more striking when provided for in the original construction of the house, and completely *enfoncé* in the masonry,) could not rank high amongst the picturesque houses of the country; those, at least, which are such by virtue of their architectural form. It was, however, very irregular in its outline to the rear, by the aid of one little projecting room, and also of a stable and little barn, in immediate contact with the dwelling-house. It had, besides, the great advantage of a varying height: two sides being about fifteen or sixteen feet high from the exposure of both stories; whereas the other two being swathed about by a little orchard that rose rapidly and unequally towards the vast mountain range in the rear, exposed only the upper story; and, consequently, on those sides the elevation rarely rose beyond seven or eight feet. All these accidents of irregular form and outline, gave to the house some little pretensions to a picturesque character; whilst its 'separable accidents' (as the logicians say) — its bowery roses and jessamine clothed it in loveliness — its

associations with Wordsworth — crowned it, to my mind, with historical dignity; and, finally, my own twenty-seven years off-and-on connection with it, have, by ties personal and indestructible, endeared it to my heart so unspeakably beyond all other houses, that even now I rarely dream through four nights running, that I do not find myself (and others beside) in some one of those rooms; and, most probably, the last cloudy delirium of approaching death will re-install me in some chamber of that same humble cottage. 'What a tale,' says Foster, the eloquent essayist — 'what a tale could be told by many a room, were the walls endowed with memory and speech!' or, in the more impassioned expressions of Wordsworth —

> Ah! what a lesson to a thoughtless man
> ——————— if any gladsome field of earth
> Could render back the sighs to which it hath responded,
> Or echo the sad steps by which it hath been trod!'

And equally affecting it would be, if such a field or such a house could render up the echoes of joy, of festal music, of jubilant laughter — the innocent mirth of infants, or the gayety, not less innocent, of youthful mothers — equally affecting would be such a reverberation of forgotten household happiness, with the re-echoing records of sighs and groans. And few indeed are the houses that, within a period no longer than from the beginning of the century to 1835 (so long was it either mine or Wordsworth's) have crowded such ample materials for those echoes, whether sorrowful or joyous.

SOCIETY OF THE LAKES.

My cottage was ready in the summer; but I was playing truant amongst the valleys of Somersetshire; and,

meantime, different families, throughout the summer, borrowed the cottage of the Wordsworths as my friends; they consisted chiefly of ladies; and some, by the delicacy of their attentions to the flowers, &c., gave me reason to consider their visit during my absence as a real honor; others — such is the difference of people in this world — left the rudest memorials of their careless habits impressed upon house, furniture, garden, &c. In November, at last, I, the long-expected, made my appearance; some little sensation did really and naturally attend my coming, for most of the draperies belonging to beds, curtains, &c., had been sewed by the young women of that or the adjoining vales. This had caused me to be talked of. Many had seen me on my visit to the Wordsworths. Miss Wordsworth had introduced the curious to a knowledge of my age, name, prospects, and all the rest of what can be interesting to know. Even the old people of the vale were a little excited by the accounts (somewhat exaggerated, perhaps) of the never ending books that continued to arrive in packing-cases for several months in succession. Nothing in these vales so much fixes the attention and respect of the people as the reputation of being a 'far learn'd' man. So far, therefore, I had already bespoke the favorable opinion of the Dalesmen. And a separate kind of interest arose amongst mothers and daughters, in the knowledge that I should necessarily want what — in a sense somewhat different from the general one — is called a 'housekeeper;' that is, not an upper servant to superintend others, but one who could undertake, in her own person, all the duties of the house. It is not discreditable to these worthy people that several of the richest and most respectable families were anxious to secure the place for a daughter. Had I been a dissipated young man, I have good reason to know that there would have been no canvassing at all for the

situation. But partly my books spoke for the character of my pursuits with these simple-minded people — partly the introduction of the Wordsworths guaranteed the safety of such a service. Even then, had I persisted in my original intention of bringing a man-servant, no respectable young woman would have accepted the place. As it was, and it being understood that I had renounced this intention, many, in a gentle, diffident way, applied for the place, or their parents on their behalf. And I mention the fact, beause it illustrates one feature in the manners of this primitive and peculiar people, the Dalesmen of Westmoreland. However wealthy, they do not think it degrading to permit even the eldest daughter to go out a few years to service. The object is not to gain a sum of money in wages, but that sort of household experience which is supposed to be unattainable upon a suitable scale out of a gentleman's family. So far was this carried, that, amongst the offers made to myself, was one from a young woman whose family was amongst the very oldest in the country, and who was at that time under an engagement of marriage to the very richest young man in the vale. She and her future husband had a reasonable prospect of possessing ten thousand pounds in land; and yet neither her own family nor her husband's objected to her seeking such a place as I could offer. Her character and manners, I ought to add, were so truly excellent, and won respect so inevitably from everybody that nobody could wonder at the honorable confidence reposed in her by her manly and spirited young lover. The issue of the matter, as respected my service, was, why I do not know, that Miss Wordsworth did not accept of her: and she fulfilled her purpose in another family, a very grave and respectable one, in Kendal. She stayed about a couple of years, returned, and married the young man to whom she had engaged herself, and is now

the prosperous mother of a fine handsome family; and she together with her mother-in-law, are the two leading matrons of the vale.

It was on a November night, about ten o'clock, that I first found myself installed in a house of my own — this cottage, so memorable from its past tenant to all men, so memorable to myself from all which has since past in connection with it. A writer in *The Quarterly Review*, in noticing the autobiography of Dr. Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff, has thought fit to say that the lakes, of course, afforded no society capable of appreciating this commonplace, coarse-minded man of talents. The person who said this I understand to have been Dr. Whitaker, the respectable antiquary. Now, that the reader may judge of the propriety with which this was asserted, I shall slightly rehearse the muster-roll of our lake society, as it existed at the time when I seated myself in my Grasmere cottage. I will undertake to say, that the meanest person in the whole scattered community was more extensively accomplished than the good bishop, was more conscientiously true to his duties, and had more varied powers of conversation. Wordsworth and Coleridge, then living at Allan Bank, in Grasmere, I will not notice in such a question. Southey, living thirteen miles off, at Keswick, I have already noticed; and he needs no *proneur*. I will begin with Windermere. At Clappersgate, a little hamlet of perhaps six houses, on its north-west angle, and about five miles from my cottage, resided two Scottish ladies, daughters of Dr. Cullen, the famous physician and nosologist. They were universally beloved for their truly kind dispositions and the firm independence of their conduct. They had been reduced from great affluence to a condition of rigorous poverty. Their father had made what should have been a fortune by his practice. The good doctor, however, was careless of his

money in proportion to the facility with which he made it. All was put into a box, open to the whole family. Breach of confidence, in the most thoughtless use of this money, there could be none; because no retraint in that point, beyond what honor and good sense imposed, was laid upon any of the elder children. Under such regulations, it may be imagined that Dr. Cullen would not accumulate any very large capital; and, at his death, the family, for the first time, found themselves in embarrassed circumstances. Of the two daughters who belonged to our lake population, one had married a Mr. Millar, son to the celebrated professor Millar, of Glasgow. This gentleman had died in America; and Mrs. Millar was now a childless widow. The other still remained unmarried. Both were equally independent; and independent even with regard to their nearest relatives; for, even from their brother — who had risen to rank and affluence as a Scottish judge, under the title of Lord Cullen — they declined to receive assistance; and except for some small addition made to their income by a novel called 'Home,' [in as many as seven volumes, I really believe,] by Miss Cullen, their expenditure was rigorously shaped to meet that very slender income, which they drew from *their* shares of the patrimonial wrecks. More honorable and modest independence, or poverty more gracefully supported, I have rarely known.

Meantime, these ladies, though literary and very agreeable in conversation, could not be classed with what now began to be known as the *lake* community of literati; for they took no interest in any one of the lake poets; did not affect to take any; and I am sure they were not aware of so much value in any one thing these poets had written, as could make it worth while even to look into their books; and accordingly as well-bred women, they took the same

course as was pursued for several years by Mrs. Hannah More, viz. cautiously to avoid mentioning their names in my presence. This was natural enough in women who had probably built their early admiration upon French models, (for Mrs. Millar used to tell me that she regarded the 'Mahomet' of Voltaire as the most perfect of human compositions,) and still more so at a period when almost all the world had surrendered their opinions and their literary consciences (so to speak) into the keeping of *The Edinburgh Review;* in whose favor, besides, those ladies had the pardonable prepossessions of national pride, as a collateral guarantee of that implicit faith, which, in those days, stronger-minded people than they took a pride in professing. Still, in defiance of prejudices mustering so strongly to support their blindness, and the still stronger support which this blindness drew from their total ignorance of everything either done or attempted by the lake poets, these amiable women persisted in one uniform tone of courteous forbearance, as often as any question arose to implicate the names either of Wordsworth or Coleridge; any question about them, their books, their families, or anything that was theirs. They thought it strange, indeed, (for so much I heard by a circuitous course,) that promising and intellectual young men — men educated at great universities, such as Mr. Wilson of Elleray, or myself, or a few others who had paid us visits, — should possess so deep a veneration for these writers; but evidently this was an infatuation — a craze, originating, perhaps, in personal connections; and, as the craze of valued friends, to be treated with tenderness. For us therefore — for our sakes — they took a religious care to suppress all allusion to these disreputable names; and it is pretty plain how sincere their indifference must have been with regard to these neighboring authors, from the evidence of one fact, viz

that when, in 1810, Mr. Coleridge began to issue, in weekly numbers, his *Friend*, which, by the prospectus, held forth a promise of meeting all possible tastes — literary, philosophic, political — even this comprehensive field of interest, combined with the adventitious attraction (so very unusual, and so little to have been looked for in that thinly-peopled region) of a local origin, from the bosom of those very hills, at the foot of which (though on a different side, they were themselves living, failed altogether to stimulate their torpid curiosity; so perfect was their persuasion beforehand, that no good thing could by possibility come out of a community that had fallen under the ban of the Edinburgh critics.

At the same time, it is melancholy to confess that, partly from the dejection of Coleridge; his constant immersion in opium at that period; his hatred of the duties he had assumed, or at least of their too frequent and periodical recurrence; and partly also from the bad selection of topics for a miscellaneous audience; from the heaviness and obscurity with which they were treated; and from the total want of variety; in consequence of defective arrangements on his part for ensuring the co-operation of his friends; no conceivable act of authorship that Coleridge *could* have perpetrated, no possible overt act of dulness and somnolent darkness that he *could* have authorized, was so well fitted to sustain the impression, with regard to him and his friends, that had pre-occupied these ladies' minds. *Habes confitentem reum!* I am sure they would exclaim; not perhaps confessing to that form of delinquency which they had been taught to expect — trivial or extravagant sentimentalism; *Germanity* alternating with tumid inanity; not this, but something quite as bad or worse, viz. palpable dulness — dulness that could be felt and handled — rayless obscurity as to the thought — and communicated in language that,

according to the Bishop of Llandaff's complaint, was not always English. For, though the particular words cited for blame were certainly known to the vocabulary of metaphysics, and had even been employed by a writer of Queen Anne's reign, (Leibnitz,) who, if any, had the gift of translating dark thoughts into plain ones — still it was intolerable, in point of good sense, that one who had to win his way into the public ear, should begin by bringing, before a popular and miscellaneous audience, themes that could require such startling and revolting words. *The Delphic Oracle* was the kindest of the nicknames which the literary taste of Windermere conferred upon the new journal. This was the laughing suggestion of a clever young lady, a daughter of the Bishop of Llandaff, who stood in a neutral position with regard to Coleridge. But others there were amongst his supposed friends, who felt even more keenly than this young lady, the shocking want of adaptation to his audience in the choice of matter; and, even to an audience better qualified to meet such matter, the want of adaptation in the mode of publication, viz. periodically, and by weekly recurrence; a mode of soliciting the public attention which even authorizes the expectation of current topics — topics arising each with its own week or day. One in particular I remember, of these disapproving friends; a Mr. Blair, an accomplished scholar, and a frequent visitor at Elleray, who started the playful scheme of a satirical rejoinder to Coleridge's *Friend*, under the name of *The Enemy*, which was to follow always in the wake of its leader, and to stimulate Coleridge, [at the same time that it amused the public,] by attic banter, or by downright opposition, and showing fight in good earnest. It was a plan that might have done good service to the world, and chiefly through a seasonable irritation (never so much wanted as then) applied to

Coleridge's too lethargic state: in fact, throughout life, it is most deeply to be regretted that Coleridge's powers and peculiar learning were never forced out into a large display by intense and almost persecuting opposition. However, this scheme, like thousands of other day-dreams and bubbles that rose upon the breath of morning spirits and buoyant youth, fell to the ground; and, in the meantime, no enemy to *The Friend* appeared that was capable of matching *The Friend* when left to itself and its own careless or vagrant guidance. *The Friend* ploughed heavily along for nine-and-twenty numbers; and our fair recusants and non-conformists in all that regarded the lake poetry or authorship, the two Scottish ladies of Clappersgate, found no reasons for changing their opinions; but continued, for the rest of my acquaintance with them, to practise the same courteous and indulgent silence, whenever the names of Coleridge or Wordsworth happened to be mentioned.

In taking leave of these Scottish ladies, it may be interesting to mention that, previously to their final farewell to our lake society, upon taking up their permanent residence in York, (which step they adopted — partly, I believe, to enjoy the more diversified society which that great city yields, and, at any rate, the more *accessible* society than amongst mountain districts — partly with a view to the cheapness of that rich district in comparison with our sterile soil, poor towns, and poor agriculture,) somewhere about the May or June of 1810, I think — they were able, by a long preparatory course of economy, to invite to the English lakes a family of foreigners — what shall I call them? — a family of Anglo-Gallo-Americans, from the Carolinas. The invitation had been of old standing, and offered, as an expression of gratitude, from these ladies, for many hospitalities and friendly services

rendered by the two heads of that family to Mrs. Millar, in former years, and under circumstances of peculiar trial. Mrs. Millar had been hastily summoned from Scotland to attend her husband at Charleston; him, on her arrival, she found dying; and, whilst overwhelmed by this sudden blow, it may be imagined that the young widow would find trials enough for her fortitude, without needing any addition to the load, from friendliness amongst a nation of strangers, and from total solitude. These evils were spared to Mrs. Millar, through the kind offices and disinterested exertions of an American gentleman, (French by birth, but American by adoption,) M. Simond, who took upon himself the cares of superintending Mr. Millar's funeral through all its details; and, by this most seasonable service, secured to the heart-stricken widow that most welcome of privileges in all situations, the privilege of unmolested privacy; for assuredly the heaviest aggravation of such bereavements lies in the necessity, too often imposed by circumstances, upon him or upon her, who may happen to be the sole responsible representative, and, at the same time, the dearest friend of the deceased, of superintending the funeral arrangements. In the very agonies of a new-born grief, whilst the heart is yet raw and bleeding, the mind not yet able to comprehend its loss, the very light of day hateful to the eyes; the necessity, even at such a moment arises, and without a day's delay, and of facing strangers, talking with strangers, discussing the most empty details, with a view to the most sordid of considerations — cheapness, convenience, custom and local prejudice; and, finally, talking about whom? why, the very child, husband, wife, who has just been torn away; and this, too, under a consciousness that the being so hallowed is, as to these strangers, an object equally indifferent with any one person whatsoever that

died a thousand years ago. Fortunate, indeed, is that person who has a natural friend, or, in default of such a friend, who finds a volunteer stepping forward to relieve him from a conflict of feeling so peculiarly unseasonable. Mrs. Millar never forgot the service which had been rendered to her; and she was happy when M. Simond, who had become a wealthy citizen of America, at length held out the prospect of coming to profit by her hospitable attentions, amongst that circle of friends with whom she and her sister had surrounded themselves in so interesting a part of England.

M. Simond had been a French emigrant; not, I believe, so far connected with the privileged orders of his country, or with any political party, as to be absolutely forced out of France by danger or by panic; but he had shared in the feelings of those who were. Revolutionary France, in the anarchy of the transition state, and still heaving to and fro with the subsiding shocks of the great earthquake, did not suit him: there was neither the polish which he sought in its manners, nor the security which he sought in its institutions. England he did not love; but yet, if not England, some country which had grown up from English foundations was the country for him; and, as he augured no rest for France, through some generations to come, but an endless succession of revolution to revolution, anarchy to anarchy, he judged it best that, having expatriated himself and lost one country, he should solemnly adopt another. Accordingly he became an American citizen. English he already spoke with propriety and fluency. And, finally, he cemented his English connections by marrying an English lady, the niece of John Wilkes. 'What John Wilkes?' asked a lady, one of a dinner-party at Calgarth, (the house of Dr. Watson, he celebrated Bishop of Llandaff,) upon the banks of

Windermere. — '*What* John Wilkes?' re-echoed the Bishop, with a vehement intonation of scorn; '*What* John Wilkes, indeed! as if there ever was more than one John Wilkes — *fama super æthera notos!*' — 'O, my Lord, I beg your pardon,' said an old lady, nearly connected with the Bishop, 'there were two; I knew one of them: he was a little, ill-looking man, and he kept the Blue Boar at ———.' — 'At Flamborough Head!' roared the Bishop, with a savage expression of disgust. The old lady, suspecting that some screw was loose in the matter, thought it prudent to drop the contest; but she murmured, *sotto voce*, 'No, not at Flamborough Head, but at Market Drayton.' Madame Simond, then, was the niece, not of the ill-looking host of the Blue Boar, but of *the* Wilkes, so memorably connected with the *parvanimities* of the English government at one period; with the casuistry of our English constitution, by the questions raised in his person as to the effects of expulsion from the House of Commons, &c. &c.; and, finally, with the history of English jurisprudence, by his intrepidity on the matter of general warrants. M. Simond's party, when at length it arrived, consisted of two persons besides himself, viz. his wife, the niece of Wilkes, and a young lady of eighteen, standing in the relation of grand-niece to the same memorable person. This young lady, highly pleasing in her person, on quitting the lake district, went northwards with her party, to Edinburgh, and there became acquainted with Mr. Francis Jeffrey, the present Lord Jeffrey, who naturally enough fell in love with her, followed her across the Atlantic, and in Charleston, I believe, received the honor of her hand in marriage.

I, as one of Mrs. Millar's friends, put in my claim to entertain her American party in my turn. One long summer's day, they all came over to my cottage in Gras-

mere; and as it became my duty to do the honors of our vale to the strangers, I thought that I could not discharge the duty in a way more likely to interest them all, than by conducting them through to Grasmere into the little inner chamber of Easedale; and there, within sight of the solitary cottage, Blentarn Ghyll, telling them the story of the Greens; because, in this way, I had an opportunity, at the same time, of showing the scenery from some of the best points, and of opening to them a few glimpses of the character and customs which distinguish this section of the English yeomanry from others. The story did certainly interest them all; and thus far I succeeded in my duties as Cicerone and Amphytrion of the day. But throughout the rest of our long morning's ramble, I remember that accident, or, possibly the politeness of M. Simond and his French sympathy with a young man's natural desire to stand well in the eyes of a handsome young woman, so ordered it, that I had constantly the honor of being Miss Wilkes' immediate companion, as the narrowness of the path pretty generally threw us into ranks of two and two. Having, therefore, through so many hours, the opportunity of an exclusive conversation with this young lady, it would have been my own fault had I failed to carry off an impression of her great good sense, as well as her amiable and spirited character. Certainly I did *mon possible* to entertain her, both on her own account and as the visitor of my Scottish friends. But, in the midst of all my efforts, I had the mortification to feel that I was rowing against the stream; that there was a silent body of prepossession against the whole camp of the lakers, which nothing could unsettle. Miss Wilkes naturally looked up, with some feelings of respect, to M. Simond, who, by his marriage with her aunt, had become her own guardian and protector. Now

M. Simond, of all the men in the world, was the last who could have appreciated an English poet. He had, to begin with, a French inaptitude for apprehending poetry at all: any poetry, that is, which transcends manners and the interests of social life. Then, unfortunately, not merely through what he had not, but equally through what he had, this cleverish Frenchman was, by whole diameters of the earth, remote from the station at which he could comprehend Wordsworth. He was a thorough knowing man of the world, keen, sharp as a razor, and valuing nothing but the tangible and the ponderable. He had a smattering of mechanics, of physiology, geology, mineralogy, and all other *ologies* whatsoever; he had, besides, at his fingers' ends, a huge body of statistical facts — how many people did live, could live, ought to live, in each particular district of each manufacturing county; how many old women of eighty-three there ought to be to so many little children of one; how many murders ought to be committed in a month by each town of five thousand souls; and so on *ad infinitum*. And to such a thin shred had his old French politeness been worn down by American attrition, that his thin lips could, with much ado, contrive to disguise his contempt for those who failed to meet him exactly upon his own field, with ex actly his own quality of knowledge. Yet, after all, it was but a little *case* of knowledge, that he had packed up neatly for a make-shift; just what corresponds to the little assortment of razors, tooth-brushes, nail brushes, hair-brushes, cork-screw, gimlet, &c. &c., which one carries in one's trunk, in a red Morocco case, to meet the casualties of a journey. The more one was indignant at being the object of such a man's contempt, the more heartily did one disdain his disdain, and recalcitrate his kicks.

On the single day which Mrs. Millar could spare for

Grasmere, I had taken care to ask Wordsworth amongst those who were to meet the party. Wordsworth came; but, by instinct, he and Monsieur Simond knew and recoiled from each other. They met, they saw, they *inter-despised*. Wordsworth, on his side, seemed so heartily to despise M. Simond, that he did not stir or make an effort to right himself under any misapprehension of the Frenchman, but coolly acquiesced in any and every inference which he might be pleased to draw; whilst M. Simond, double-charged with contempt from *The Edinburgh Review*, and from the report (I cannot doubt) of his present hostess, manifestly thought Wordsworth too abject almost for the trouble of too openly disdaining him. More than one of us could have done justice on this malefactor, by meeting M. Simond on his own ground, and taking the conceit out of him most thoroughly. I was one of those; for I had the very knowledge, or some of it, that he most paraded. But one of us was lazy; another thought it not *tanti;* and I, for my part, in my own house, could not move upon such a service. And in those days, moreover, when as yet I loved Wordsworth not less than I venerated him, a success that would have made him suffer in any man's opinion by comparison with myself, would have been painful to my feelings. Never did party meet more exquisitely ill-assorted; never did party separate with more exquisite and cordial disgust, in its principal members towards each other. I mention the case at all, in order to illustrate the abject condition of worldly opinion in which Wordsworth then lived. Perhaps his ill fame was just then in its meridian; for M. Simond, soon after, published his English tour in two octavo volumes; and, of course, he goes over his residence at the lakes; yet it is a strong fact that, according to my remembrance,

he does not vouchsafe to mention such a person as Wordsworth.

One anecdote, before parting with these ladies, I will mention, as received from Miss Cullen on her personal knowledge of the fact. There are stories current which resemble this; but wanting that immediate guarantee for their accuracy which, in this case, I at least was obliged to admit, in the attestation of so perfectly veracious a reporter as this excellent lady. A female friend of her own, a person of family and consideration, being on the eve of undertaking a visit to a remote part of the kingdom, dreamed that, on reaching the end of her journey, and drawing up to the steps of the door, a footman, with a very marked and forbidding expression of countenance, his complexion pale and bloodless, and his manners sullen, presented himself to let down the steps of her carriage. This same man, at a subsequent point of her dream, appeared to be stealing up a private staircase, with some murderous instruments in his hands, towards a bed-room door. This dream was repeated, I think, twice. Some time after, the lady, accompanied by a grown-up daughter, accomplished her journey. Great was the shock which awaited her on reaching her friend's house: a servant, corresponding in all points to the shadowy outline of her dream, equally bloodless in complexion, and equally gloomy in manner, appeared at her carriage door. The issue of the story was — that upon a particular night, after a stay of some length, the lady grew unaccountably nervous; resisted her feelings for some time; but at length, at the entreaty of her daughter, who slept in the same room, suffered some communication of the case to be made to a gentleman resident in the house, who had not yet retired to rest. This gentleman, struck by the dream, and still more on recalling to mind some suspicious

preparations, as if for a hasty departure, in which he had detected the servant, waited in concealment until three o'clock in the morning — at which time hearing a stealthy step moving up the staircase, he issued with fire-arms, and met the man at the lady's door, so equipped as to leave no doubt of his intentions; which possibly contemplated only robbing of the lady's jewels, but possibly also murder in a case of extremity. There are other stories with some of the same circumstances; and, in particular, I remember one very like it in Dr. Abercrombie's 'Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers,' [1830,] p. 283. But in this version of Dr. Abercrombie's, (supposing it another version of the same story,) the striking circumstance of anticipating the servant's features is omitted; and in no version, except this of Miss Cullen's, have I heard the names mentioned both of the parties to the affair, and also of the place at which it occurred.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHARLES LLOYD.

IMMEDIATELY below the little village of Clappersgate, in which the Scottish ladies resided — Mrs. Millar and Mrs. Cullen — runs the wild mountain river called the *Brathay*, which, descending from Langdale Head, and soon after becoming confluent with the Rothay, (a brook-like stream that comes originally from Easedale, and takes its course through the two lakes of Grasmere and Rydal,) finally composes a considerable body of water, that flows along, deep, calm, and steady — no longer brawling, bubbling, tumultuous — into the splendid lake of Windermere, the largest of our English waters; or, if not, at least the longest, and of the most extensive circuit. Close to this little river, Brathay, on the farther side, as regards Clappersgate, (and what, though actually part and parcel of a district that is severed by the sea, or by Westmoreland, from Lancashire proper, is yet, from some old legal usage, denominated the Lancashire side of the Brathay,) stands a modest family mansion, called Low Brathay, by way of distinction from another and a larger mansion, about a quarter of a mile beyond it, which, standing upon a little eminence, is called High Brathay.

In this house of Low Brathay lived, and continued to live, for many years, (in fact, until misery, in its sharpest form, drove him from his hearth and his household hap-

piness,) Charles L——, the younger; — on his own account, and for his personal qualities, worthy of a separate notice in any biography, howsoever sparing in its digressions; but, viewed in reference to his fortunes, amongst the most interesting men I have known. Never do I reflect upon his hard fate, and the bitter though mysterious persecution of body which pursued him, dogged him, and thickened as life advanced, but I feel gratitude to Heaven for my own exemption from suffering in that particular form; and, in the midst of afflictions, of which two or three have been most hard to bear, because not unmingled with pangs of remorse for the share which I myself may have had in causing them — still, by comparison with the lot of Charles L——, I acknowledge my own to have been happy and serene. Already, on my first hasty visit to Grasmere in 1807, I found Charles L——, settled with his family at Brathay, and a resident there, I believe, of some standing. It was on a wet gloomy evening; and Miss Wordsworth and I were returning from an excursion to Esthwaite Water, when, suddenly, in the midst of blinding rain, without previous notice, she said — Pray, let us call for a few minutes at this house. A garden gate led us into a little shrubbery, chiefly composed of lawns, beautifully kept, through which ran a gravel road, just wide enough to admit a single carriage. A minute or so saw us housed in a small comfortable drawing-room, but with no signs of living creatures near it; and, from the accident of double doors, all covered with baize, being scattered about the house, the whole mansion seemed the palace of silence, though populous, I understood, with children. In no long time appeared Mr. L——; soon followed by his youthful wife, both radiant with kindness; and it may be supposed that we were not suffered to depart for some hours. I call Mrs. L——

youthful; and so I might call her husband; for both were youthful, considered as the parents of a numerous family, six or seven children then living — Charles L—— himself not being certainly more than twenty-seven, and his 'Sophia' perhaps not twenty-five.

On that short visit I saw enough to interest me in both; and two years after, when I became myself a permanent resident in Grasmere, the connection between us became close and intimate. My cottage stood just five miles from Brathay; and there were two mountain roads which shortened the space between us, though not the time nor the toil. But, notwithstanding this distance, often and often, upon the darkest nights, for many years, I used to go over about nine o'clock, or an hour later, and sit with him till one. Mrs. L—— was simply an amiable young woman, of pleasing person, perfectly well principled, and, as a wife and mother, not surpassed by anybody I have known in either of those characters. In figure she somewhat resembled the ever memorable and most excellent Mrs. Jordan; she was exactly of the middle height, and, having that slight degree of *embonpoint*, even in youth, which never through life diminishes or increases. Her complexion may be imagined, from the circumstances of her hair being tinged with a slight and not unpleasing shade of red. Finally, in manners, she was remarkably self-possessed, free from all awkard embarrassment, and (to an extent which some people would wonder at in one who had been brought up, I believe, wholly in a great commercial town) perfectly lady-like. So much description is due to one, who, though no authoress, and never making the slightest pretension to talents, was too much connected subsequently with the lakers to be passed over in a review of their community. Ah! gentle lady! your head, after struggling through many a year with strange

calamities, has found rest at length; but not in English ground, or amongst the mountains which you loved: at Versailles it is, and perhaps within a stone's throw of that Mrs. Jordan whom in so many things you resembled, and most of all in the misery which settled upon your latter years. There you lie, and for ever, whose blooming matronly figure rises up to me at this moment from a depth of thirty years! and your children scattered into all lands.

But for Charles L——, he, by his literary works, is so far known to the public, that, on his own account, he merits some separate notice. His poems do not place him in the class of powerful poets; they are loosely conceived — faultily even at times — and not finished in the execution. But they have a real and a mournful merit under one aspect, which might be so presented to the general reader as to win a peculiar interest for many of them, and for some a permanent place in any judicious *thesaurus* — such as we may some day hope to see drawn off, and carefully filtered, from the enormous mass of poetry produced since the awakening era of the French Revolution. This aspect is founded on the relation which they bear to the real events and the unexaggerated afflictions of his own life. The feelings which he attempts to express were not assumed for effect nor drawn by suggestion from others, and then transplanted into some ideal experience of his own. They do not belong to the mimetic poetry so extensively cultivated, but they were true solitary sighs, wrung from his own meditative heart by excess of suffering, and by the yearning after old scenes and household faces of an impassioned memory, brooding over vanished happiness, and cleaving to those early times when life wore even for *his* eyes the golden light of Paradise. But he had other and higher accomplishments

of intellect than he showed in his verses, as I shall presently explain; and of a nature which make it difficult to bring them adequately within the reader's apprehension.

Meantime, I will sketch an outline of poor L——'s history, so far as I can pretend to know it. He was the son, and probably his calamitous life originally dated from his being the son, of Quaker parents. It was said, indeed, by himself as well as others, that the mysterious malady which haunted him, had been derived from an ancestress in the maternal line; and this may have been true; and, for all that, it may also be true that Quaker habits were originally answerable for this legacy of wo. It is sufficiently well known that in the training of their young people, the Society of Friends make it a point of conscience to apply severe checks to all open manifestations of natural feeling, or of exuberant spirits. Not the passions — they are beyond their control — but the expression of those passions by any natural language; this they lay under the heaviest restraint; and, in many cases, it is possible that such a system of thwarting nature may do no great mischief; just as we see the American Indians, in moulding the plastic skulls of their infants into capricious shapes, do not, after all, much disturb the ordinary course of nature, nor produce the idiots we might have expected. But, then, the reason why such tampering may often terminate in slight results is, because often there is not much to tamper with; the machinery is so slight, and the total range within which it plays is perhaps so narrow, that the difference between its normal action and its widest deviation may, after all, be practically unimportant. For there are many men and women of whom I have already said, borrowing the model of the word from Hartley, that they have not so much passions as *passiun-*

cles. These, however, are in *one* extreme; and others there are and will be, in every class, and under every disadvantage, who are destined to illustrate the very opposite extreme. Great passions — passions pointing to the paths of love, of ambition, of glory, martial or literary — these in men — and in women, again, these, either in some direct shape, or taking the form of intense sympathy with the same passions as moving amongst contemporary men — *will* gleam out fitfully amongst the placid children of Fox and Penn, not less than amongst us who profess no war with the nobler impulses of our nature. And, perhaps, according to the Grecian doctrine of *antiperistasis*, strong untameable passions are more likely to arise, even in consequence of the counteraction. Deep passions undoubtedly lie in the blood and constitution of Englishmen; and Quakers,* after all, do not, by being such, cease, therefore, to be Englishmen.

It is, I have said, sufficiently well known that the Quakers make it a point of their moral economy to lay the severest restraints upon all ebullitions of feeling. Whatever may be the nature of the feeling, whatever its strength, utter itself by word or by gesture it must not; smoulder it may, but it must not break into a flame. This is known; but it is not equally known that this unnatural restraint, falling into collision with two forces at once, the

* In using the term *Quakers*, I hoped it would have been understood, even without any explanation from myself, that I did not mean to use it scornfully or insultingly to that respectable body. But it was the great oversight of their founders not to have saved them from a nickname, by assuming some formal designation expressive of some capital characteristic. At present one is in this dilemma; either one must use a tedious periphrasis, (*e. g. the young women of the Society of Friends,*) or the ambiguous one of *young female Friends.*

force of passion and of youth, not uncommonly records its own injurious tendencies, and publishes the rebellious movements of nature, by distinct and anomalous diseases. And further, I have been assured, upon most excellent authority, that these diseases, strange and elaborate affections of the nervous system, are found *exclusively* amongst the young men and women of the Quaker society; that they are known and understood exclusively amongst physicians who have practised in great towns having a large Quaker population, such as Birmingham; that they assume a new type, and a more inveterate character, in the second or third generation, to whom this fatal inheritance is often transmitted; and finally, that, if this class of nervous derangements does not increase so much as to attract public attention, it is simply because the community itself — the Quaker body — does not increase, but, on the contrary, is rather on the wane.

From a progenitrix, then, no matter in what generation, C. L—— inherited that awful malady which withered his own happiness, root and branch, gathering strength from year to year. His father was a banker, and, I presume, wealthy, from the ample allowance which he always made to his son Charles. Charles, it is true, had the rights of primogeniture — which, however, in a commercial family, are not considerable — but, at the same time, though eldest, he was eldest of seventeen or eighteen brothers and sisters, and of these, I believe, that some round dozen or so were living at the time when I first came to know him. He had been educated in the bosom of Quaker society; his own parents, with most of their friends, were Quakers; and, even of his own generation, all the young women continued Quakers. Naturally, therefore, as a boy, he also was obliged to conform to the Quaker ritual. But this ritual presses with great inequality upon the two sexes:

in so far, at least, as regards dress. The distinctions of dress which announce the female Quaker, are all in her favor. In a nation eminent for personal purity, and where it should seem beforehand impossible for any woman to create a pre-eminence for herself in that respect; so it is, however, that the female Quaker, by her dress, seems even purer than other women, and consecrated to a service of purity; earthly soil or taint, even the sullying breath of mortality, seems as if kept aloof from her person — forcibly held in repulsion by some protecting sanctity. This transcendent purity, and a nun-like gentleness, self-respect, and sequestration from the world — these are all that *her* peculiarity of dress expresses; and surely this 'all' is quite enough to win every man's favorable feelings towards her, and something even like homage. But, with the male Quaker, how different is the case! *His* dress — originally not remarkable by its shape, but solely by its color and want of ornament, so peculiar has it become in a lapse of nearly two centuries — seems expressly devised to point him out to ridicule. In some towns, it is true, such as Birmingham and Kendal, the public eye is so familiar with this costume, that in *them* it excites no feeling whatever more than the professional costume of butchers, bakers, grooms, &c. But in towns not commercial — towns of luxury and parade — a Quaker is exposed to most mortifying trials of his self-esteem. It has happened that I have followed a young man of this order for a quarter of a mile, in Bath, or in one of the fashionable streets of London, on a summer evening, when numerous servants were lounging on the steps of the front door, or at the area gates; and I have seen him run the gauntlet of grim smiles from the men, and *heard* him run the gauntlet of that sound — the worst which heaven has in its artillery of scorn against the peace of poor man — the

half-suppressed titter of the women. Laughing outright is bad, but still *that* may be construed into a determinate insult that studiously avows more contempt than is really felt; but tittering is hell itself; for it seems mere nature, and absolute truth, that extort this expression of contempt in spite of every effort to suppress it.

Some such expression it was that drove Charles L—— into an early apostacy from his sect: early it must have been, for he went at the usual age of eighteen to Cambridge, and there, as a Quaker, he could not have been received. He, indeed, of all men, was the least fitted to contend with the world's scorn, for he had no great fortitude of mind, his vocation was not to martyrdom, and he was cursed with the most exquisite sensibility. This sensibility, indeed, it was, and not so properly any determinate passion, which had been the scourge of his ancestors. There was something that appeared effeminate about it; and which, accordingly, used to provoke the ridicule of Wordsworth, whose character, in all its features, wore a masculine and Roman harshness. But, in fact, when you came to know Charles L——, there was, even in this slight tinge of effeminacy, something which conciliated your pity by the feeling that it impressed you with, of being part of his disease. His sensibility was eminently *Rousseauish* — that is, it was physico-moral; now pointing to appetites that would have mastered him had he been less intellectual, and governed by a less exalted standard of moral perceptions; now pointing to fine aerial speculations, subtle as a gossamer, and apparently calculated to lead him off into abstractions even too remote from flesh and blood.

During the Cambridge vacation, or, it might be, even before he went to Cambridge — and my reason for thinking so is, because both, I believed, belonged to the same

town, if it could not be said of them as of Pyramus and Thisbe, that '*contiguas habuere domos*' — he fell desperately in love with Miss Sophia P——n. Who she was I never heard — that is, what were her connections; but, I presume, that she must have been of an opulent family, because, Mrs. P——n, the mother of Mrs. L——, occasionally paid a visit to her daughter at the lakes; and that she brought with her a handsomely-appointed equipage, as to horses and servants. This I have reason to remember from the fact of herself and her daughter frequently coming over on summer evenings to drink tea with me, and the affront (as I then thought it) which Wordsworth fastened upon me in connection with one of those visits. One evening, * * * * * *

A pang of wrath gathered at my heart. Yet why? One moment, I felt, indeed, that it was not gentlemanly to interfere with the privileges of any man standing in the situation which I then occupied, of host; but still I should not have regarded it, except from its connection with a case I recollected in a previous year. One fine summer day, we were walking together — Wordsworth, myself, and Southey. Southey had been making earnest inquiries about poor L——, just then in the crisis of some severe illness, and Wordsworth's answer had been partly lost to me. I put a question upon it, when, to my surprise, (my wrath internally, but also to my special amusement,) he replied that, in fact, what he had said was a matter of some delicacy, and not quite proper to be communicated except to *near friends of the family*. This to me! — O ye Gods! — to me, who knew by many a hundred conversations, how disagreeable Wordsworth was, both to Charles L—— and to his wife; whilst, on the other hand — not by words only, but by deeds, and by the most delicate acts of confidential favor — I knew that Mr. Wilson

(Professor Wilson) and myself had been selected as friends in cases which were not so much as named to Wordsworth, The arrogance of Wordsworth was well illustrated in this case of the L——s.

But to resume L——'s history. Being so desperately in love with Miss P——n, and his parents being rich, why should he not have married her? *Why*, I know not. But some great obstacles arose; and, I presume, on the side of Miss P——n's friends; for, actually, it became necessary to steal her away; and the person in whom L—— confided for this delicate service, was no other than Southey. A better choice he could not have made. Had the lady been Helen of Greece, Southey would not have had a thought but for the honor and interests of his confiding friend.

Having thus, by proxy, run away with his young wife, and married her, L—— brought her to Cambridge. It is a novel thing in Cambridge, though not altogether unprecedented, for a student to live there with a wife. This novelty L—— exhibited to the University for some time; but then, finding the situation not perfectly agreeable to the delicate sensibilities of his young wife, L—— removed, first, I think, to Penrith; and, after some changes, he settled down at Brathay, from which, so long as he stayed on English ground — that is, for about fifteen or sixteen years — he never moved. When I first crossed his path at the lakes, he was in the zenith of the brief happiness that was granted to him on earth. He stood in the very centre of earthly pleasures; and, that his advantages may be easily estimated, I will describe both himself and his situation.

First, then, as to his person, he was tall and somewhat clumsy — not intellectual so much as benign and conciliatory in his expression of face. His features were not

striking, but they expressed great goodness of heart; and latterly wore a deprecatory expression that was peculiarly touching to those who knew its cause. His manners were free from all modes of vulgarity; and, where he acquired his knowledge I know not, (for I never heard him claim any connection with people of rank,) but a knowledge he certainly had of all the conventional usages amongst the higher circles, and of those purely arbitrary customs which mere good sense and native elegance of manner are not, of themselves, sufficient to teach. Some of these he might have learned from the family of the Bishop of Llandaff; for with the ladies of that family he was intimate, especially with the eldest daughter, who was an accomplished student in that very department of literature which L—— himself most cultivated, viz. all that class of works which deal in the analysis of human passions, or attempt to exhibit the development of human character, in relation to sexual attachments, when placed in trying circumstances. L—— corresponded with Miss Watson in French; the letters, on both sides, being full of spirit and originality; the subjects generally drawn from Rousseau's 'Heloise' or his 'Confessions,' from 'Corinne,' from 'Delphine,' or some other work of Madame de Stael. For such disquisitions L—— had a real and a powerful genius. It was really a delightful luxury to hear him giving free scope to his powers for investigating subtle combinations of character; for distinguishing all the shades and affinities of some presiding qualities, disentangling their intricacies, and balancing, antithetically, one combination of qualities against another. Take, for instance, any well-known character from the drama, and pique L——'s delicate perception of differences by affecting to think it identical with some other character of the same class — instantly, in his anxiety to mark out

the features of dissimilitude, he would hurry into an impromptu analysis of each character separately, with an eloquence, with a keenness of distinction, and a felicity of phrase, which were perfectly admirable. This display of familiarity with life and human nature, in all its masquerадings, was sometimes truly splendid. But two things were remarkable in these displays. One was, that the splendor was quite hidden from himself, and unperceived amidst the effort of mind, and oftentimes severe struggles, in attempting to do himself justice, both as respected the thoughts and the difficult task of clothing them in adequate words; he was as free from vanity, or even from complacency in reviewing what he had effected, as it is possible for a human creature to be. He thought, indeed, slightly of his own power; and, which was even a stronger barrier against vanity, his displays of this kind were always effective in proportion to his unhappiness; for unhappiness it was, and the restlessness of internal irritation, that chiefly drove him to exertions of his intellect; else, and when free from this sort of excitement, he tended to the quiescent state of a listener; for he thought everybody better than himself. The other point remarkable in these displays was, (and most unfavorable, of course, it proved to his obtaining the reputation they merited,) that he could succeed in them only before confidential friends, those on whom he could rely for harboring no shade of ridicule towards himself or his theme. Let but one person enter the room of whose sympathy he did not feel secure, and his powers forsook him as suddenly as the buoyancy of a bird that has received a mortal shot in its wing. Accordingly, it is a fact that neither Wordsworth nor Coleridge ever suspected the amount of power which was latent in L——; for he firmly believed that both of them despised him. Mrs. L—— thought the same thing. Often and

often she has said to me, smiling in a mournful way — 'I know too well that both Wordsworth and Coleridge entertain a profound contempt for my poor Charles.' And, when I combated this notion, declaring that, although they might (and probably did) hold very cheap such writers as Rousseau and Madame de Stael, and, consequently, could not approve of studies directed so exclusively to their works, or to works of the same class, still that was not sufficient to warrant them in undervaluing the powers which Mr. L—— applied to such studies. To this, or similar arguments, she would reply by simply shaking her head, and then sink into silence.

But the time was fast approaching, when all pains of this kind, from supercilious or well-founded disparagement, were to be swallowed up in more awful considerations and fears. The transition was not a long one, from the state of prosperity in which I found L—— about 1807–10, to the utter overthrow of his happiness, and, for his friends, the overthrow of all hopes on his behalf. In the three years I have assigned, his situation seemed luxuriously happy, as regarded the external elements of happiness. He had, without effort of his own, an income, must punctually remitted from his father, of from £1500 to £1800 per annum. This income was entirely resigned to the management of his prudent and excellent wife, and, as his own personal expenses, separate from those of his family, were absolutely none at all, except for books, she applied the whole, either to the education of her children, or to the accumulation of all such elegances of life about their easy unpretending mansion, as might soothe her husband's nervous irritations, or might cheer his drooping spirits, with as much variety of pleasure as a mountainous seclusion allowed. The establishment of servants was usually limited to six — one only being a

man-servant — but these were well chosen: and one or two were confidential servants, tried by long experience. Rents are always low in the country for unfurnished houses; and even for the country, Low Brathay was a cheap house; but it contained everything for comfort, nothing at all for splendor. Consequently, a very large part of their income was disposable for purposes of hospitality; and, when I first knew them, Low Brathay was distinguished above every other house at the head of Windermere, or within ten miles of that neighborhood, by the judicious assortment of its dinner parties, and the gayety of its *soirées dansantes*. These parties were never crowded; poor L—— rarely danced himself; but it gladdened his benevolent heart to see the young and blooming floating through the mazes of the dances then fashionable, whilst he sat by looking on, at times, with pleasure from his sympathy with the pleasure of others; at times pursuing some animated discussion with a literary friend; at times lapsing into profound reverie. At some of these dances it was that I first saw Wilson of Elleray, (Professor Wilson,) in circumstances of animation, and buoyant with youthful spirits, under the excitement of lights, wine, and, above all, of female company. He, by the way, was the best male dancer (not professional) I have ever seen; and this advantage he owed entirely to the extraordinary strength of his foot in all its parts, to its peculiarly happy conformation, and to the accuracy of his ear; for, as to instruction, I have often understood from his family that he never had any. Here also danced the future wife of Professor Wilson, Miss Jane P——, at that time the leading belle of the Lake country. But, perhaps, the most interesting person in those parties, from the peculiarity of her situation, was Mrs. L—— herself, still young, and, indeed, not apparently exceeding in years most of

her unmarried visitors; still dancing and moving through cotillons, or country dances, as elegantly and as lightly as the youngest of the company; still framing her countenance to that expression of cheerfulness which hospitality required; but stealing for ever troubled glances to the sofa, or the recess, where her husband had reclined himself, dark, foreboding looks, that saw but too truly the coming darkness which was soon to swallow up every vestige of this festal pleasure. She looked upon herself and her children too clearly as a doomed household; and such, in some sense, they were. And, doubtless, to poor L—— himself, it must a thousandfold have aggravated his sufferings — that he could trace, with a steady eye, the continual growth of that hideous malady which was stealing over the else untroubled azure of his life, and with inaudible foot was hastening onwards for ever to that night in which no man can work, and in which no man can hope.

It was so painful to Charles L——, naturally, to talk much about his bodily sufferings, and it would evidently have been so unfeeling in one who had no medical counsels to offer, if, for the mere gratification of his curiosity, he had asked for any circumstantial account of its nature or symptoms, that I am at this moment almost as much at a loss to understand what was the mode of suffering which it produced, how it operated, and through what organs, as any of my readers can be. All that I know is this: — For several years — six or seven, suppose — the disease expressed itself by intense anguish of irritation; not an irritation that gnawed at any one local spot, but diffused itself; sometimes causing a determination of blood to the head, then shaping itself in a general sense of plethoric congestion in the blood-vessels, then again remoulding itself into a restlessness that became insupportable;

preying upon the spirits and the fortitude, and finding no permanent relief or periodic interval of rest, night or day Sometimes L—— used robust exercise, riding on horseback as fast as he could urge the horse forward; sometimes, for many weeks together, he walked for twenty miles, or even more, at a time; sometimes (this was in the earlier stages of the case) he took large doses of ether; sometimes he used opium, and, I believe, in very large quantities; and I understood him to say that, for a time, it subdued the excess of irritability, and the agonizing accumulation of spasmodic strength which he felt for ever growing upon him, and, as it were, upon the very surface of his whole body. But all remedies availed him nothing; and once he said to me, when we were out upon the hills — 'Ay, that landscape below, with its quiet cottage, looks lovely, I dare say, to you: as for me, I see it, but I feel it not at all; for, if I begin to think of the happiness, and its various modes which, no doubt, belong to the various occupants, according to their ages and hopes, then I *could* begin to feel it; but it would be a painful effort to me; and the worst of all would be, when *I had* felt it; for that would so sharpen the prospect before me, that just such happiness, which naturally ought to be mine, is soon on the point of slipping away from me for ever.'

Afterwards he told me that his situation internally was always this — it seemed to him as if on some distant road he heard a dull trampling sound, and that he knew it, by a misgiving, to be the sound of some man, or party of men, continually advancing slowly, continually threatening, or continually accusing him; that all the various artifices which he practised for cheating himself into comfort, or beguiling his sad forebodings, were, in fact, but like so many furious attempts, by drum and trumpets, or even by artillery, to drown the distant noise of his

enemies; that, every now and then, mere curiosity, or rather breathless anxiety, caused him to hush the artificial din, and to put himself into the attitude of listening again; when, again and again, and so he was sure it would still be, he caught the sullen and accursed sound, trampling and voices of men, or whatever it were, still steadily advancing, though still perhaps at a great distance. It was too evident that derangement of the intellect, in some shape, was coming on; because slight and transient fits of aberration from his perfect mind, had already, at intervals, overtaken him; flying showers, from the skirts of the clouds, that precede and announce the main storm. This was the anguish of his situation, that, for years, he saw before him what was on the road to overwhelm his faculties and his happiness. Still his fortitude did not wholly forsake him, and, in fact, proved to be far greater than I or others had given him credit for possessing. Once only he burst suddenly into tears, on hearing the innocent voices of his own children laughing, and of one especially who was a favorite; and he told me that sometimes, when this little child took his hand and led him passively about the garden, he had a feeling that prompted him (however weak and foolish it seemed) to call upon this child for protection; and that it seemed to him as if he might still escape, could he but surround himself only with children. No doubt this feeling arose out of his sense that a confusion was stealing over his thoughts, and that men would soon find this out to be madness, and would deal with him accordingly; whereas children, as long as he did them no harm, would see no reason for shutting him up from his own fireside, and from the human face divine.

It would be too painful to pursue the unhappy case through all its stages. For a long time, the derangement of poor L——'s mind was but partial and fluctuating;

and it was the opinion of Professor Wilson, from what he had observed, that it was possible to recall him to himself by firmly opposing his delusions. He certainly, on his own part, did whatever he could to wean his thoughts from gloomy contemplation, by pre-occupying them with cheerful studies, and such as might call out his faculties. He translated the whole of Alfieri's dramas, and published his translation. He wrote and printed (but did not publish) a novel in two volumes; my copy of which he soon after begged back again so beseechingly, that I yielded; and so, I believe, did all his other friends: in which case no copy may now exist. All, however, availed him not; the crisis so long dreaded arrived. He was taken away to a lunatic asylum; and, for some long time, he was lost to me as to the rest of the world. The first memorial I had of him, was a gentleman, with his hair in disorder, rushing into my cottage at Grasmere, throwing his arms about my neck, and bursting into stormy weeping — it was poor L——!

Yes, it was indeed poor L——, a fugitive from a madhouse, and throwing himself for security upon the honor and affection of one whom, with good reason, he supposed confidentially attached to him. Could there be a situation so full of interest or perplexity? Should any ill happen to himself, or to another, through his present enlargement — should he take any fit of vindictive malice against any person whom he might view as an accomplice in the plans against his own freedom, and probably many persons in the neighborhood, medical and non-medical, stood liable to such a suspicion — upon me, I felt as the abettor of his evasion, would all the blame settle. And unfortunately we had, in the recent records of this very vale, a most awful lesson, and still fresh in everybody's remembrance, of the danger connected with this sort of crimina.

connivance, or passive participation in the purposes of maniacal malignity. A man, named Watson, had often and for years threatened to kill his aged and inoffensive mother. His threats, partly from their own monstrosity, and from the habit of hearing him for years repeating them without any serious attempt to give them effect — partly also from an unwillingness to aggravate the suffering of the poor lunatic, by translating him out of a mountaineer's liberty, into the gloomy confinement of an hospital — were treated with neglect; and at length, after years of disregarded menace, and direct forewarning to the parish authorities, he took an opportunity (which indeed was rarely wanting to him) of killing the poor gray-headed woman, by her own fireside. This case I had before my mind; and it was the more entitled to have weight with me when connected with the altered temper of L——, who now, for the first time in his life, had dropped his gentle and remarkably quiet demeanor, for a tone, savage and ferocious, towards more than one individual. This tone, however lurked under a mask, and did not come forward, except by fits and starts, for the present. Indeed his whole manner wore the appearance of studied dissimulation, from the moment when he perceived that I was not alone. In the interval of years since I had last seen him, (which might have been in 1818,) my own marriage had taken place; accordingly, on turning round and seeing a young woman seated at the tea-table, where heretofore he had been so sure of finding me alone, he seemed shocked at the depth of emotion which he had betrayed before a stranger, and anxious to reinstate himself in his own self-respect, by assuming a tone of carelessness and indifference. No person in the world could feel more profoundly on his account than the young stranger before him, who in fact was not a stranger

to his situation and the excess of his misery. But this he could not know; and it was not, therefore, until we found ourselves alone, that he could be prevailed upon to speak of himself, or of the awful circumstances surrounding him, unless in terms of most unsuitable levity.

One thing I resolved, at any rate, to make the rule of my conduct towards this unhappy friend, viz. to deal frankly with him, and in no case to make myself a party to any plot upon his personal freedom. Retaken I knew he would be, but not through me; even a murderer in such a case, (*i. e.* the case of having thrown himself upon my good faith,) I would not betray. I drew from him an account of the immediate facts in his late escape, and his own acknowledgment that even now the pursuit must be close at hand; probably, that his recaptors were within a few hours' distance of Grasmere; that he would be easily traced. That my cottage furnished no means of concealment, he knew too well; still in these respects he was not worse off in Grasmere than elsewhere; and, at any rate, it might save him from immediate renewal of his agitation, and might procure for him one night of luxurious rest and relaxation, by means of conversation with a friend, if he would make up his mind to stay with us until his pursuers should appear; and them I could easily contrive to delay, for at least one day and night, by throwing false information in their way, such as would send them on to Keswick at least, if not to Whitehaven, through the collusion of the very few persons who could have seen him enter my door. My plan was simple and feasible: but somehow or other, and, I believe, chiefly because he did not find me alone, nothing I could say had any weight with him; nor would he be persuaded to stay longer than for a little tea. Staying so short a time, he found it difficult to account for having ever come. But it was too evidently useless to

argue the point with him; for he was altered, and had become obstinate and intractable. I prepared, therefore, to gratify him according to his own plan, by bearing him company on the road to Ambleside, and (as he said) to Brathay. We set off on foot: the distance to Ambleside is about three and a half miles; and one-third of this distance brought us to an open plain on the margin of Rydalmere, where the road lies entirely open to the water. This lake is unusually shallow, by comparison with all its neighbors; but, at the point I speak of, it takes (especially when seen under any mode of imperfect light) the appearance of being gloomily deep: two islands of exquisite beauty, but strongly discriminated in character, and a sort of recess or bay in the opposite shore, across which the shadows of the hilly margin stretch with great breadth and solemnity of effect to the very centre of the lake, together with the very solitary character of the entire valley, on which (excluding the little hamlet in its very gorge or entrance) there is not more than one single house, combine to make the scene as impressive by night as any in the lake country. At this point it was that my poor friend paused to converse, and, as it seemed, to take his leave, with an air of peculiar sadness, as if he had foreseen (what in fact proved to be the truth) that we now saw each other for the final time. The spot seemed favorable to confidential talk; and here, therefore, he proceeded to make his heart-rendering communication: here he told me rapidly the tale of his sufferings, and, what oppressed his mind far more than those at this present moment, of the cruel indignities to which he had been under the necessity of submitting. In particular, he said, that a man of great muscular power had instructions to knock him down whenever he made any allusion to certain speculative subjects, which the presiding

authorities of the asylum chose to think connected with his unhappy disease. Many other brutalities, damnable and dishonoring to human nature, were practised in this asylum, not always by abuse of the powers lodged in the servants, but by direct authority from the governors; and yet it had been selected as the one most favorable to a liberal treatment of the patients; and, in reality, it continued to hold a very high reputation.

Great and monstrous are the abuses which have been detected in such institutions, and exposed by parliamentary interference, as well as by the energy of individual philanthropists; but it occurs to one most forcibly, that, after all, the light of this parliamentary torch must have been but feeble and partial, when it was possible for cases such as these to escape all general notice, and for the establishment which fostered them to retain a character as high as any in the land for enlightened humanity. Perhaps the paramount care in the treatment of lunatics should be directed towards those appliances, and that mode of discipline, which is best fitted for restoring the patient finally to a sane condition; but the *second* place in the machinery of his proper management, should be reserved for that system of attentions, medical or non-medical, which have the best chance of making him happy for the present; and especially because his present happiness must always be one of the directest avenues to his restoration. In the present case, could it be imagined that the shame, agitation, and fury, which convulsed poor L——, as he went over the circumstances of his degradation, were calculated for any other than the worst effects upon the state and prospects of his malady? By sustaining the tumult of his brain, they must, almost of themselves, have precluded his restoration. At the side of that quiet lake he stood for nearly an hour repeating his wrongs, his eyes glaring continually, as the

light thrown off from those parts of the lake which reflected bright tracts of sky amongst the clouds fitfully illuminated them, and again and again threatening, with gestures the wildest, vengeance the most savage upon those vile keepers who had so abused any just purposes of authority. He would talk of little else; apparently he could not. A hollow effort he would make now and then, when his story had apparently reached its close, to sustain the topic of ordinary conversation; but in a minute he had relapsed into the one subject which possessed him. In vain I pressed him to return with me to Grasmere. He was now, for a few hours to come, to be befriended by the darkness; and he resolved to improve the opportunity for some purpose of his own, which, as he showed no disposition to communicate any part of his future plans, I did not directly inquire into. In fact, part of his purpose in stopping where he did, had been to let me know that he did not wish for company any further. We parted; and I saw him no more. He was soon recaptured; then transferred to some more eligible asylum; then liberated from all restraint; after which, with his family, he went to France; where again it became necessary to deprive him of liberty. And, finally, in France it was that his feverish existence found at length a natural rest and an everlasting liberty; for there it was, in a *maison de santé*, at or near Versailles, that he died, (and I believe tranquilly,) a few years after he had left England. Death was indeed to him, in the words of that fine mystic, Blake the artist, a 'golden gate' — the gate of liberation from the captivity of half a life; or, as I once found the case beautifully expressed in a volume of poems a century old, and otherwise poor enough, for they offered nothing worth recollecting beyond this single line, in speaking of the particular morning in which some young man had died —

'That morning brought him peace and liberty.'

Charles L—— never returned to Brathay after he had once been removed from it; and the removal of his family soon followed. Mrs. L——, indeed, returned at intervals from France to England, upon business connected with the interests of her family; and, during one of those fugitive visits, she came to the Lakes, where she selected Grasmere for her residence, so that I had opportunities of seeing her every day, for a space of several weeks. Otherwise, I never again saw any of the family, except one son, an interesting young man, who sought most meritoriously, by bursting asunder the heavy yoke of constitutional inactivity, to extract a balm for his own besetting melancholy, from a constant series of exertions in which he had forced himself to engage, for promoting education or religious knowledge amongst his poorer neighbors. But often and often, in years after all was gone, I have passed old Brathay, or have gone over purposely after dark, about the time when, for many a year, I used to go over to spend the evening; and, seating myself on a stone, by the side of the mountain river Brathay, have staid for hours listening to the same sound to which so often C—— L—— and I used to hearken together with profound emotion and awe — the sound of pealing anthems, as if streaming from the open portals of some illimitable cathedral; for such a sound does actually arise, in many states of the weather, from the peculiar action of the river Brathay upon its rocky bed; and many times I have heard it, of a quiet night, when no stranger could have been persuaded to believe it other than the sound of choral chanting — distant, solemn, saintly. Its meaning and expression were, in those earlier years, uncertain and general; not more pointed or determined in the direction which it impressed upon one's feelings than the light of setting suns: and sweeping, in fact, the whole harp of pensive sensibilities, rather than striking the chord of any one specific sentiment.

But since the ruin or dispersion of that household, after the smoke had ceased to ascend from their hearth, or the garden walks to re-echo their voices, oftentimes, when lying by the river side, I have listened to the same aerial saintly sound, whilst looking back to that night, long hidden in the frost of receding years, when Charles and Sophia L——, now lying in foreign graves, first dawned upon me, coming suddenly out of rain and darkness; then — young, rich, happy, full of hope, belted with young children, (of whom also most are long dead,) and standing apparently on the verge of a labyrinth of golden hours. Musing on that night in November, 1807, and then upon the wreck that had been wrought by a space of fifteen years, I would say to myself sometimes, and seem to hear it in the songs of this watery cathedral — Put not your trust in any fabric of happiness that has its root in man or the children of men. Sometimes even I was tempted to discover in the same music, a sound such as this — Love nothing, love nobody, for thereby comes a killing curse in the rear. But sometimes also, very early on a summer morning, when the dawn was barely beginning to break, all things locked in sleep, and only some uneasy murmur or cock-crow, at a faint distance, giving a hint of resurrection for earth and her generations, I have heard in that same chanting of the little mountain river, a more solemn if a less agitated admonition — a requiem over departed happiness, and a protestation against the thought that so many excellent creatures, but a little lower than the angels, whom I have seen only to love in this life — so many of the good, the brave, the beautiful, the wise — can have appeared for no higher purpose or prospect than simply to point a moral, to cause a little joy and many tears, a few perishing moons of happiness and years of vain regret — No! that the destiny of man is more in correspondence with the gran-

deur of his endowments; and that our own mysterious tendencies are written hieroglyphically in the vicissitudes of day and night, of winter and summer, and throughout the great alphabet of Nature. But on that theme — Beware, reader! Listen to no *intellectual* argument. One argument there is, one only there is, of philosophic value: an argument drawn from the *moral* nature of man: an argument of Immanuel Kant's. The rest are dust and ashes.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOCIETY OF THE LAKES.

Passing onwards from Brathay, a ride of about forty minutes carries you to the summit of a wild heathy tract, along which, even at noonday, few sounds are heard that indicate the presence of man, except now and then a woodman's axe, in some of the many coppice-woods scattered about that neighborhood. In Northern England there are no sheep-bells; which is an unfortunate defect, as regards the full impression of wild solitudes, whether amongst undulating heaths, or towering rocks: at any rate, it is so felt by those who, like myself, have been trained to its soothing effects, upon the hills of Somersetshire — the Cheddar, the Mendip, or the Quantock — or any other of those breezy downs, which once constituted such delightful local distinctions for four or five counties in that south-west angle of England. At all hours of day or night, this silvery tinkle was delightful; but, after sunset, in the solemn hour of gathering twilight, heard (as it always was) intermittingly, and at great varieties of distance, it formed the most impressive incident for the ear, and the most in harmony with the other circumstances of the scenery, that, perhaps, anywhere exists — not excepting even the natural sounds, the swelling and dying intonations of insects wheeling in their vesper flights. Silence and desolation are never felt so profoundly as

when they are interrupted by solemn sounds, recurring by uncertain intervals, and from distant places. But in these Westmoreland heaths, and uninhabited ranges of hilly ground, too often nothing is heard, except, occasionally, the wild cry of a bird — the plover, the snipe, or perhaps the raven's croak. The general impression is, therefore, cheerless; and the more are you rejoiced when, looking down from some one of the eminences which you have been gradually ascending, you descry, at a great depth below,* the lovely lake of Coniston. The head of this lake is the part chiefly interesting, both from the sublime character of the mountain barriers, and from the intricacy of the little valleys at their base. On a little verdant knoll, near the north-eastern margin of the lake, stands a small villa, called Tent Lodge, built by Colonel Smith, and for many years occupied by his family. That daughter of Colonel Smith, who drew the public attention so powerfully upon herself by the splendor of her attainments, had died some months before I came into the country. But yet, as I was subsequently acquainted with her family through the Lloyds, (who were within an easy drive of Tent Lodge,) and as, moreover, with regard to Miss Elizabeth Smith herself, I came to know more than the world knew — drawing my knowledge from many of her friends, but especially from Mrs. Hannah More, who

* The approach from Ambleside or Hawkshead, though fine, is far less so than from Grasmere, through the vale of Tilberthwaite, to which, for a *coup de theatre*, I recollect nothing equal. Taking the left-hand road, so as to make for Monk Coniston, and not for Church Coniston, you ascend a pretty steep hill, from which, at a certain point of the little gorge or *hawse*, (*i. e. hals*, neck or throat, viz. the dip in any hill through which the road is led,) the whole lake of six miles in length, and the beautiful foregrounds, all rush upon the eye with the effect of a pantomimic surprise — not by a graduated revelation, but by an instantaneous flash.

had been intimately connected with her; for these reasons, I shall rehearse the leading points of her story; and the rather, because her family, who were equally interested in that story, long continued to form part of the Lake society.

On my first becoming acquainted with Miss Smith's pretensions, it is very true that I regarded them with but little concern; for nothing ever interests me less than great philological attainments, or at least that mode of philological learning which consists in mastery over languages. But one reason for this indifference is, that the apparent splendor is too often a false one. They who know a vast number of languages, rarely know any one with accuracy; and the more they gain in one way, the more they lose in another. With Miss Smith, however, I gradually came to know that this was not the case; or, at any rate, but partially the case; for, of some languages which she possessed, and those the least accessible, it appeared, finally, that she had even a critical knowledge. It created also a secondary interest in these difficult accomplishments of hers, to find that they were so very extensive. Secondly, That they were pretty nearly all of self-acquisition. Thirdly, That they were borne so meekly, and with unaffected absence of all ostentation. As to the first point, it appears (from Mrs. H. Bowdler's Letter to Dr. Mummsen, the friend of Klopstock) that she made herself mistress of the French, the Italian, the Spanish, the Latin, the German, the Greek, and the Hebrew languages. She had no inconsiderable knowledge of the Syriac, the Arabic, and the Persic. She was a good geometrician and algebraist. She was a very expert musician. She drew from nature, and had an accurate knowledge of perspective. Finally, she manifested an early talent for poetry; but, from pure modesty,

destroyed most of what she had written, as soon as her acquaintance with the Hebrew models had elevated the standard of true poetry in her mind, so as to disgust her with what she now viewed as the tameness and inefficiency of her own performances. As to the second point — that for these attainments she was indebted, almost exclusively, to her own energy; this is placed beyond all doubt, by the fact, that the only governess she ever had (a young lady not much beyond her own age) did not herself possess, and therefore could not have communicated, any knowledge of languages, beyond a little French and Italian. Finally, as to the modesty with which she wore her distinctions, *that* is sufficiently established by every page of her printed works, and her letters. Greater diffidence, as respected herself, or less willingness to obtrude her knowledge upon strangers, or even upon those correspondents who would have wished her to make a little more display, cannot be imagined. And yet I repeat, that her knowledge was as sound and as profound as it was extensive. For, taking only one instance of this, her Translation of Job has been pronounced, by Biblical critics of the first rank, a work of real and intrinsic value, without any reference to the disadvantages of the translator, or without needing any allowances whatever. In particular, Dr. Magee, the celebrated writer on the Atonement, and subsequently a dignitary of the Irish Church — certainly one of the best qualified judges at that time — describes it as 'conveying more of the character and meaning of the Hebrew, with fewer departures from the idiom of the English, than any other translation whatever that we possess.' So much for the scholarship; whilst he rightly notices, in proof of the translator's taste and discretion, that 'from the received version she very seldom unnecessarily deviates:' thus refusing to disturb what was

henerally speaking, so excellent and time-hallowed for any dazzling effects of novelty; and practising this forbearance as much as possible, notwithstanding novelty was, after all, the main attraction upon which the new translation must rest.

The example of her modesty, however, is not more instructive than that of her continued struggle with difficulties in pursuing knowlege, and with misfortunes in supporting a Christian fortitude. I shall briefly sketch her story: — She was born at Burnhall, in the county of Durham, at the latter end of the year 1776. Early in 1782, when she had just entered her sixth year, her parents removed into Suffolk, in order to be near a blind relation, who looked with anxiety to the conscientious attentions of Mrs. Smith, in superintending his comforts and interests. This occupation absorbed so much of her time, that she found it necessary to obtain the aid of a stranger in directing the studies of her daughter. An opportunity just then offered of attaining this object, concurrently with another not less interesting to herself, viz. that of offering an asylum to a young lady who had recently been thrown adrift upon the world by the misfortunes of her parents. They had very suddenly fallen from a station of distinguished prosperity; and the young lady herself, then barely sixteen, was treading that path of severe adversity, upon which, by a most singular parallelism of ill fortune, her young pupil was destined to follow her steps at exactly the same age. Being so prematurely called to the office of governess, this young lady was expected rather to act as an elder companion, and as a lightener of the fatigues attached to their common studies, than exactly as their directress. And, at all events, from her who was the only even nominal governess that Miss Smith ever had, it is certain that she could have learned

little or nothing This arrangement subsisted between two and three years, when the death of their blind kinsman allowed Mr. Smith's family to leave Suffolk, and resume their old domicile of Burnhall. But from this, by a sudden gleam of treacherous prosperity, they were summoned, in the following year, (June, 1785,) to the splendid inheritance of Piercefield — a show-place upon the river Wye; and, next after Tintern Abbey and the river itself, an object of attraction to all who then visited the Wye.

A residence on the Wye, besides its own natural attraction, has this collateral advantage, that it brings Bath (not to mention Clifton and the Hot Wells) within a visiting distance for people who happen to have carriages; and Bath, it is hardly necessary to say, besides its stationary body of polished and intellectual residents, has also a floating casual population of eminent or interesting persons, gathered into this focus from every quarter of the empire. Amongst the literary connections which the Piercefield family had formed in Bath, was one with Mrs. Bowdler and her daughter — two ladies not distinguished by any very powerful talents, but sufficiently tinctured with literature and the love of literature to be liberal in their opinions. And, fortunately, (as it turned out for Miss Smith,) they were eminently religious: but not in a bigoted way; for they were conciliating and winning in the outward expression of their religious character; capable of explaining their own creed with intelligent consistency; and, finally, were the women to recommend any creed, by the sanctity and the benignity of their own lives. This strong religious bias of the two Bath ladies, operated in Miss Smith's favor by a triple service. First of all, it was this depth of religious feeling, and, consequently, of interest in the Scriptures, which had origin-

ally moved the elder Mrs. Bowdler to study the Hebrew and the Greek, as the two languages in which they had been originally delivered. And this example it was of *female* triumph over their difficulties, together with the proof thus given that such attainments were entirely reconcilable with femine gentleness, which first suggested to Miss Smith the project of her philological studies; and, doubtless, these studies, by the constant and agreeable occupation which they afforded, overspread the whole field of her life with pleasurable activity. 'From the above-mentioned visit,' says her mother, writing to Dr. Randolph, and referring to the visit which these Bath ladies had made to Piercefield — 'from the above-mentioned visit I date the turn of study which Elizabeth ever after pursued, and which I firmly believe the amiable conduct of our guests first led her to delight in.' Secondly, to the religious sympathies which connected these two ladies with Miss Smith, was owing the fervor of that friendship, which afterwards, in their adversity, the Piercefield family found more strenuously exerted in their behalf by the Bowdlers than by all the rest of their connections. And, finally, it was this piety and religious resignation, with which she had been herself inoculated by her Bath friends, that, throughout the calamitous era of her life, enabled Miss Elizabeth Smith to maintain her own cheerfulness unbroken, and greatly to support the failing fortitude of her mother.

This visit of her Bath friends to Piercefield — so memorable an event for the whole subsequent life of Miss Smith — occurred in the summer of 1789; consequently, when she was just twelve and a half years old. And the impressions then made upon her childish, but unusually thoughtful, mind, were kept up by continual communications, personal or written, through the years immediately

succeeding. Just two and a half years after, in the very month when Miss Smith accomplished her fifteenth year, upon occasion of going through the rite of Confirmation, according to the discipline of the English Church, she received a letter of religious counsel — grave, affectionate, but yet humble — from the elder Mrs. Bowdler, which might almost have been thought to have proceeded from a writer who had looked behind the curtain of fate, and had seen the forge at whose fires the shafts of Heaven were even now being forged.

Just twelve months from the date of this letter, in the very month when Miss Elizabeth Smith completed her sixteenth year, the storm descended upon the house of Piercefield. The whole estate, a splendid one, was swept away, by the failure (as I have heard) of one banking-house; nor was there recovered, until some years after, any slender fragments of that estate. Piercefield was, of course, sold; but that was not the heaviest of her grievances to Miss Smith. She was now far advanced upon her studious career; for it should be mentioned, as a lesson to other young ladies of what may be accomplished by unassisted labor, that, between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one, all her principal acquisitions were made. No treasure, therefore, could, in her eyes, be of such priceless value as the Piercefield library; but this also followed the general wreck: not a volume, not a pamphlet, was reserved; for the family were proud in their integrity, and would receive no favors from the creditors. Under this scorching test, applied to the fidelity of friends, many, whom Mrs. Smith mentions in one of her letters under the name of 'summer friends,' fled from them by crowds: dinners, balls, soirées — credit, influence, support — these things were no longer to be had from Piercefield. But more annoying even

than the fickle levity of such open deserters, was the timid and doubtful countenance, as I have heard Mrs. Smith say, which was still offered to them by some who did not relish, *for their own sakes*, being classed with those who had paid their homage only to the fine house and fine equipages of Piercefield. These persons continued, therefore, to send invitations to the family; but so frigidly, that every expression manifested but too forcibly how disagreeable was the duty with which they were complying; and how much more they submitted to it for their own reputation's sake, than for any kindness they felt to their old friends. Mrs. Smith was herself a very haughty woman, and it maddened her to be the object of condescensions so insolent and so reluctant.

Meantime, her daughter, young as she was, became the moral support of her whole family, and the fountain from which they all drew consolation and fortitude. She was confirmed in her religious tendencies by two circumstances of her recent experience: one was, that she, the sole person of her family who courted religious consolations, was also the sole person who had been able to maintain cheerfulness and uniform spirits: the other was, that although it could not be truly said of *all* their worldly friends that they had forsaken them, yet, of their religious friends it could be said, not one had done so; and at last, when for some time they had been so far reduced as not to have a roof over their heads, by one of these religious friends it was that they were furnished with every luxury as well as comfort of life; and, in a spirit of such sisterly kindness, as made the obligation not painful to the proudest amongst them.

It was in 1792 that the Piercefield family had been ruined; and in 1794, out of the wrecks which had been gathered together, Mr. Smith (the father of the family)

bought a commission in the army. For some time the family continued to live in London, Bath, and other parts of England; but, at length, Mr. Smith's regiment was ordered to the west of Ireland; and the ladies of his family resolved to accompany him to head-quarters. In passing through Wales, (May, 1796,) they paid a visit to those sentimental anchorites of the last generation, whom so many of us must still remember — Miss Ponsonby, and Lady Eleanor Butler, (a sister of Lord Ormond,) whose hermitage stood near to Llangollen, and, therefore, close to the usual Irish route, by way of Holyhead. On landing in Ireland, they proceeded to a seat of Lord Kingston — a kind-hearted, hospitable Irishman, who was on the old Piercefield list of friends, and had never wavered in his attachment. Here they stayed three weeks. Miss Smith renewed, on this occasion, her friendship with Lady Isabella King, the daughter of Lord Kingston; and a little incident connected with this visit, gave her an opportunity afterwards of showing her delicate sense of the sacred character which attaches to gifts of friendship, and showing it by an ingenious device, that may be worth the notice of other young ladies in the same case. Lady Isabella had given to Miss Smith a beautiful horse, called Brunette. In process of time, when they had ceased to be in the neighborhood of any regimental stables, it became matter of necessity that Brunette should be parted with. To have given the animal away, had that been otherwise possible, might only have been delaying the sale for a short time. After some demur, therefore, Miss Smith adopted this plan: she sold Brunette, but applied the whole of the price, 120 guineas, to the purchase of a splendid harp. The harp was christened Brunette, and was religiously preserved to the end of her life. Now Brunette, after all, must have died in a few years; but

by translating her friend's gift into another form, she not only connected the image of her distant friend, and her sense of that friend's kindness, with a pleasure and a useful purpose of her own, but she conferred on that gift a perpetuity of existence.

At length came the day when the Smiths were to quit Kingston Lodge for the quarters of the regiment. And now came the first rude trial of Mrs. Smith's fortitude, as connected with points of mere decent comfort. Hitherto, floating amongst the luxurious habitations of opulent friends, she might have felt many privations as regarded splendor and direct personal power, but never as regarded the primary elements of comfort, warmth, cleanliness, convenient arrangements. But on this journey, which was performed by all the party on horseback, it rained incessantly. They reached their quarters drenched with wet, weary, hungry, forlorn. The quartermaster had neglected to give any directions for their suitable accommodation — no preparations whatever had been made for receiving them; and, from the luxuries of Lord Kingston's mansion, which habit had made so familiar to them all, the ladies found themselves suddenly transferred to a miserable Irish cabin — dirty, narrow, nearly quite unfurnished, and thoroughly disconsolate. Mrs. Smith's proud spirit fairly gave way, and she burst out into a fit of weeping. Upon this, her daughter Elizabeth, [and Mrs. Smith herself it was that told the anecdote, and often she told it, or told others of the same character, at Lloyd's,] n a gentle, soothing tone, began to suggest the many blessings which lay before them in life, and some even for this evening.

'Blessings, child!' — her mother impatiently interrupted her. 'What sort of blessings? Irish blessings! – county of Sligo blessings, I fancy. Or, perhaps, you

call this a blessing?' holding up a miserable fragment of an iron rod, which had been left by way of poker, or rather as a substitute for the whole assortment of fire-irons. The daughter laughed; but she changed her wet dress expeditiously, assumed an apron; and so various were her accomplishments, that, in no long time, she had gathered together a very comfortable dinner for her parents, and, amongst other things, a currant tart, which she had herself made, in a tenement absolutely unfurnished of every kitchen utensil.

In the autumn of this year, (1796,) they returned to England; and, after various migrations through the next four years, amongst which was another and longer visit to Ireland, in 1800, they took up their abode in the sequestered vale of Patterdale. Here they had a cottage upon the banks of Ulleswater; the most gorgeous of the English lakes, from the rich and ancient woods which possess a great part of its western side; the sublimest, as respects its mountain accompaniments, except only, perhaps, Wastdale; and, I believe, the largest; for, though only nine miles in length, and, therefore, shorter by about two miles than Windermere, it averages a greater breadth. Here, at this time, was living Mr. Clarkson — that son of thunder, that Titan, who was in fact that one great Atlas that bore up the Slave-Trade abolition cause — now resting from his mighty labors and nerve-shattering perils. So much had *his* nerves been shattered by all that he had gone through in toil, in suffering, and in anxiety, that, for many years I have heard it said, he found himself unable to walk up stairs without tremulous motions of his limbs. He was, perhaps, too iron a man, too much like the *Talus* of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,' to appreciate so gentle a creature as Miss Elizabeth Smith. A more suitable friend, and one who thoroughly comprehended her, and expressed

his admiration for her in verse, was Thomas Wilkinson of Yanwath, a Quaker, a man of taste, and of delicate sensibility. He wrote verses occasionally; and though feebly enough as respected poetic power, there were often such delicate touches of feeling, such gleams of real tenderness, in some redeeming part of each poem, that even Wordsworth admired and read them aloud with pleasure. Indeed Wordsworth has addressed to him one copy of verses, or rather to his spade, which was printed in the collection of 1807, and which Lord Jeffrey, after quoting one line, dismissed as too dull for repetition.

During this residence upon Ulleswater (winter of 1800) it was that a very remarkable incident befell Miss Smith. I have heard it often mentioned, and sometimes with a slight variety of circumstances; but I here repeat it from an account drawn up by Miss Smith herself, who was most literally exact and faithful to the truth in all reports of her own personal experience. There is, on the western side of Ulleswater, a fine cataract, (or, in the language of the country, a *force*,) known by the name of Airey Force; and it is of importance enough, especially in rainy seasons, to attract numerous visitors from among 'the Lakers.' Thither, with some purpose of sketching, not the whole scene, but some picturesque features of it, Miss Smith had gone, quite unaccompanied. The road to it lies through Gobarrow Park; and it was usual, at that time, to take a guide from the family of the Duke of Norfolk's keeper, who lived in Lyulph's Tower — a solitary hunting lodge, built by his Grace for the purposes of an annual visit which he used to pay to his estates in that part of England. She, however, thinking herself sufficiently familiar with the localities, had declined to encumber her motions with such an attendant; consequently she was alone. For half an hour or more, she continued to

ascend: and, being a good 'cragswoman,' from the experience she had won in Wales as well as in northern England, she had reached an altitude much beyond what would generally be thought corresponding to the time The path had vanished altogether; but she continued to pick out one for herself amongst the stones, sometimes receding from the *force*, sometimes approaching it, according to the openings allowed by the scattered masses of rock. Pressing forward in this hurried way, and never looking back, all at once she found herself in a little stony chamber, from which there was no egress possible in advance. She stopped and looked up. There was a frightful silence in the air. She felt a sudden palpitation at her heart, and a panic from she knew not what. Turning, however, hastily, she soon wound herself out of this aerial dungeon; but by steps so rapid and agitated, that, at length, on looking round, she found herself standing at the brink of a chasm, frightful to look down. That way, it was clear enough, all retreat was impossible; but, on turning round, retreat seemed in every direction alike even more impossible. Down the chasm, at least, she might have leaped, though with little or no chance of escaping with life; but on all other quarters it seemed to her eye that, at no price, could she effect an exit, since the rocks stood round her, in a semi-circus, all lofty, all perpendicular, all glazed with trickling water, or smooth as polished porphyry. Yet how, then, had she reached the point? The same track, if she could hit that track, would surely secure her escape. Round and round she walked; gazed with almost despairing eyes; her breath came thicker and thicker; for path she could not trace by which it was possible for her to have entered. Finding herself grow more and more confused, and every instant nearer to sinking into some fainting fit or convulsion, she

resolved to sit down and turn her thoughts quietly into some less exciting channel. This she did; gradually recovered some self-possession; and then suddenly a thought rose up to her, that she was in the hands of God, and that he would not forsake her. But immediately came a second and reproving thought — that this confidence in God's protection might have been justified had she been ascending the rocks upon any mission of duty; but what right could *she* have to any providential deliverance, who had been led thither in a spirit of levity and carelessness? I am here giving *her* view of the case; for, as to myself, I fear greatly, that if *her* steps were erring ones, it is but seldom indeed that *nous autres* can pretend to be treading upon right paths. Once again she rose! and, supporting herself upon a little sketching-stool that folded up into a stick, she looked upwards, in the hope that some shepherd might, by chance, be wandering in those aerial regions; but nothing could she see except the tall birches growing at the brink of the highest summits, and the clouds slowly sailing overhead. Suddenly, however, as she swept the whole circuit of her station with her alarmed eye, she saw clearly, about two hundred yards beyond her own position, a lady, in a white muslin morning robe, such as were then universally worn by young ladies until dinner-time. The lady beckoned with a gesture and in a manner that, in a moment, gave her confidence to advance — *how* she could not guess, but in some way that baffled all power to retrace it, she found instantaneously the outlet which previously had escaped her. She continued to advance towards the lady, whom now, in the same moment, she found to be standing upon the other side of the *force*, and also to be her own sister. How or why that young lady, whom she had left at home earnestly occupied with her own studies, should have followed and overtaken her,

filled her with perplexity. But this was no situation for putting questions; for the guiding sister began to descend, and, by a few simple gestures, just serving to indicate when Miss Elizabeth was to approach and when to leave the brink of the torrent, she gradually led her down to a platform of rock, from which the further descent was safe and conspicuous. There Miss Smith paused, in order to take breath from her panic, as well as to exchange greetings and questions with her sister. But sister there was none. All trace of her had vanished; and when, in two hours after, she reached her home, Miss Smith found her sister in the same situation and employment in which she had left her; and the whole family assured her that she had never stirred from the house.

In 1801, I believe it was that the family removed from Patterdale to Coniston. Certainly they were settled there in the spring of 1802; for, in the May of that spring, Miss Elizabeth Hamilton — a writer now very much forgotten, or remembered only by her 'Cottagers of Glenburnie,' but then a person of mark and authority in the literary circles of Edinburgh — paid a visit to the Lakes, and stayed there for many months, together with her married sister, Mrs. Blake; and both ladies cultivated the friendship of the Smiths. Miss Hamilton was captivated with the family; and, of the sisters in particular, she speaks as of persons that, 'in the days of paganism, would have been worshipped as beings of a superior order, so elegantly graceful do they appear, when, with easy motion, they guide their light boat over the waves.' And of Miss Elizabeth, separately, she says, on another occasion, — 'I never before saw so much of Miss Smith; and, in the three days she spent with us, the admiration which I had always felt for her extraordinary talents, and as extraordinary virtues, was hourly augmented. She is, indeed, a most charming

creature; and, if one could inoculate her with a little of the Scotch frankness, I think she would be one of the most perfect of human beings.'

About four years had been delightfully passed in Coniston. In the summer of 1805, Miss Smith laid the foundation of her fatal illness in the following way, according to her own account of the case, to an old servant, a very short time before she died: — 'One very hot evening, in July, I took a book, and walked about two miles from home, when I seated myself on a stone beside the lake. Being much engaged by a poem I was reading, I did not perceive that the sun was gone down, and was succeeded by a very heavy dew, till, in a moment, I felt struck on the chest as if with a sharp knife. I returned home, but said nothing of the pain. The next day, being also very hot, and every one busy in the hay-field, I thought I would take a rake, and work very hard to produce perspiration, in the hope that it might remove the pain; but it did not.' From that time, a bad cough, with occasional loss of voice, gave reason to suspect some organic injury of the lungs. Late in the autumn of this year, (1805,) Miss Smith accompanied her mother and her two younger sisters to Bristol, Bath, and other places in the south, on visits to various friends. Her health went through various fluctuations until May of the following year, when she was advised to try Matlock. Here, after spending three weeks, she grew worse; and, as there was no place which she liked so well as the Lakes, it was resolved to turn homewards. About the beginning of June, she and her mother returned alone to Coniston: one of her sisters was now married; her three brothers were in the army or navy; and her father almost constantly with his regiment. Through the next two months she faded quietly away, sitting always in a

tent,* that had been pitched upon the lawn, and which remained open continually to receive the fanning of the intermitting airs upon the lake, as well as to admit the bold mountain scenery to the north. She lived nearly through the first week of August, dying on the morning of August 7; and the circumstances of her last night are thus recorded by her mother: — 'At nine she went to bed. I resolved to quit her no more, and went to prepare for the night. Turpin [Miss Smith's maid] came to say that Elizabeth entreated I would not stay in her room. I replied — "On that one subject I am resolved; no power on earth shall keep me from her; so, go to bed yourself." Accordingly, I returned to her room; and, at ten, gave her the usual dose of laudanum. After a little time, she fell into a doze, and, I thought slept till one. She was uneasy and restless, but never complained; and, on my wiping the cold sweat off her face, and bathing it with camphorated vinegar, which I did very often in the course of the night, she thanked me, smiled, and said — "That is the greatest comfort I have." She slept again for a short time; and, at half past four, asked for some chicken broth, which she took perfectly well. On being told the hour, she said, "*How long this night is!*" She continued very uneasy; and, in half an hour after, and on my inquiring if I could move the pillow, or do anything to relieve her, she replied, "There is nothing for it but quiet." At six, she said, "I must get up and have some mint tea." I then called for Turpin, and felt my angel's pulse: it was fluttering; and by that I knew I should soon lose her. She took the tea well. Turpin began to put on her clothes, and was

* And, in allusion to this circumstance, the house afterwards raised on a neighboring spot, at this time suggested by Miss Smith, received the name of Tent Lodge.

proceeding to dress her, when she laid her head upon the faithful creature's shoulder, became convulsed in the face, spoke not, looked not, and in ten minutes expired.'

She was buried in Hawkshead churchyard, where a small tablet of white marble is raised to her memory, on which there is the scantiest record that, for a person so eminently accomplished, I have ever met with. After mentioning her birth and age, (twenty-nine,) it closes thus: — 'She possessed great talents, exalted virtues, and humble piety.' Anything so unsatisfactory or so commonplace I have rarely known. As much, or more, is often said of the most insipid people; whereas Miss Smith was really a most extraordinary person. I have conversed with Mrs. Hannah More often about her; and I never failed to draw forth some fresh anecdote illustrating the vast extent of her knowledge, the simplicity of her character, the gentleness of her manners, and her unaffected humility. She passed, it is true, almost inaudibly through life; and the stir which was made after her death soon subsided. But the reason was — that she wrote but little! Had it been possible for the world to measure her by her powers, rather than her performances, she would have been placed, perhaps, in the estimate of posterity, at the head of learned women; whilst her sweet and feminine character would have rescued her from all shadow and suspicion of that reproach which too often settles upon the learned character when supported by female aspirants.

The family of Tent Lodge continued to reside at Coniston for many years; and they were connected with the Lake literary clan chiefly through the Lloyds and those who visited the Lloyds; for it is another and striking proof of the slight hold which Wordsworth, &c., had upon the public esteem in those days, that even Miss Smith, with all her excessive diffidence in judging of books and

authors, never seems, by any one of her letters, to have felt the least interest about Wordsworth or Coleridge; nor did Miss Hamilton, with all her *esprit de corps* and acquired interest in everything at all bearing upon literature, ever mention them in those of her letters which belong to the period of her Lake visit in 1802; nor, for the six or seven months which she passed in that country, and within a short morning ride of Grasmere, did she ever think it worth her while to seek an introduction to any one of the resident authors.

Yet this could not be altogether from ignorance that such people existed; for Thomas Wilkinson, the intimate and admiring friend of Miss Smith, was also the friend of Wordsworth; and, for some reason that I never could fathom, he was a sort of pet with Wordsworth. Professor Wilson or myself were never honored with one line, one allusion from his pen; but many a person of particular feebleness has received that honor. Amongst these I may rank Thomas Wilkinson; not that I wish to speak contemptuously of him; he was a Quaker, of elegant habits, rustic simplicity, and with tastes, as Wordsworth affirms, 'too pure to be refined.' His cottage was seated not far from the great castle of the Lowthers; and, either from mere whim — as sometimes such whims do possess great ladies — whims, I mean, for drawing about them odd-looking, old-world people, as *piquant* contrasts to the fine gentlemen of their own society, or because they did really feel a homely dignity in the plain speaking 'Friend,' and liked, for a frolic, to be *thou'd* and *thee'd* — or some motive or other, at any rate, they introduced themselves to Mr. Wilkinson's cottage; and I believe that the connection was afterwards improved by the use they found for his services in forming walks through the woods of Lowther, and leading them in such a circuit as to take

advantage of all the most picturesque stations. As a poet, I presume that Mr. Wilkinson could hardly have recommended himself to the notice of ladies who would naturally have modelled their tastes upon the favorites of the age. A poet, however, in a gentle, unassuming way, he was; and he, therefore, is to be added to the *corps litteraire* of the Lakes; and Yanwath to be put down as the advanced post of that *corps* to the north.

Two families there still remain, which I am tempted to gather into my group of Lake society — notwithstanding it is true that the two most interesting members of the first had died a little before the period at which my sketch commences; and the second, though highly intellectual in the person of that particular member whom I have chiefly to commemorate, was not, properly speaking, literary; and, moreover, belongs to a later period of my own Westmoreland experience — being, at the time of my settlement in Grasmere, a girl at a boarding-school. The first was the family of the Sympsons, whom Mr. Wordsworth has spoken of, with deep interest, more than once. The eldest son, a clergyman, and, like Wordsworth, an *alumnus* of Hawkshead school, wrote, amongst other poems, 'The Vision of Alfred.' Of these poems, Wordsworth says, that they 'are little known; but they contain passages of splendid description; and the versification of his "*Vision*" is harmonious and animated.' This is much for Wordsworth to say; and he does him even the honor of quoting the following illustrative simile from his description of the sylphs in motion, (which sylphs constitute the machinery of his poem;) and, probably, the reader will be of opinion that this passage justifies the praise of Wordsworth. It is founded, as he will see, on the splendid scenery of the heavens in Polar latitudes, as seen by reflection in polished ice at midnight.

'Less varying hues beneath the Pole adorn
The streamy glories of the Boreal morn,
That, waving to and fro, their radiance shed
On Bothnia's gulf, with glassy ice o'erspread;
Where the lone native, as he homeward glides,
On polished sandals o'er the imprisoned tides,
Sees, at a glance, above him and below,
Two rival heavens with equal splendor glow;
Stars, moons, and meteors, ray oppose to ray;
And solemn midnight pours the blaze of day'

'He was a man,' says Wordsworth, in conclusion, 'of ardent feeling; and his faculties of mind, particularly his memory, were extraordinary.' Brief notices of his life ought to find a place in the history of Westmoreland.

But it was the father of this Joseph Sympson who gave its chief interest to the family. Him Wordsworth has described, at the same time sketching his history, with a fulness and a circumstantiality beyond what he has conceded to any other of the real personages in 'The Excursion. 'A priest he was by function;' but a priest of that class which is now annually growing nearer to extinction among us, not being supported by any sympathies in this age.

'His course,
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,
Had been irregular — I might say wild;
By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care
Too little check'd. An active, ardent mind;
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day;
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games;
A generous spirit, and a body strong,
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl —
Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
Of a priz'd visitant in the jolly hall
Of country squire, or at the statelier board
Of Duke or Earl — from scenes of courtly pomp

Withdrawn, to while away the summer hours
In condescension amongst rural guests.
With these high comrades he had revelled long,
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled,
Till the heart sicken'd.'

Slowly, however, and indignantly his eyes opened fully to the windy treachery of all the promises held out to him; and, at length, for mere bread, he accepted, from an 'unthought-of patron,' a most 'secluded chapelry' in Cumberland. This was 'the little, lowly house of prayer' of Wythburn, elsewhere celebrated by Wordsworth; and, for its own sake, interesting to all travellers, both for its deep privacy, and for the excessive humility of its external pretensions, whether as to size or ornament. Were it not for its twin sister at Buttermere, it would be the very smallest place of worship in all England; and it looks even smaller than it is, from its position; for it stands at the base of the mighty Helvellyn, close to the high-road between Ambleside and Keswick, and within speaking distance of the upper lake — (for Wythburn Water, though usually passed by the traveller under the impression of absolute unity in its waters, owing to the interposition of a rocky screen, is, in fact, composed of two separate lakes.) To this miniature and most secluded congregation of shepherds, did the once dazzling parson officiate as pastor; and it seems to amplify the impression already given of his versatility, that he became a diligent and most fatherly, though not peculiarly devout, teacher and friend. The temper, however, of the northern Dalesmen, is not constitutionally turned to religion; consequently that part of his defects did him no especial injury, when compensated (as, in the judgment of these Dalesmen, it *was* compensated) by ready and active kindness, charity the most diffusive, and patriarchal hospitality. The

living, as I have said, was in Wythburn; but there was no parsonage, and no house in this poor dale which was disposable for that purpose. So Mr. Sympson crossed the marches of the sister counties, which to him was about equidistant from his chapel and his house, into Grasmere, on the Westmoreland side. There he occupied a cottage by the roadside; a situation which, doubtless, gratified at once his social and his hospitable propensities; and, at length, from age, as well as from paternal character and station, came to be regarded as the patriarch of the vale. Before I mention the afflictions which fell upon his latter end, and by way of picturesque contrast to his closing scene, let me have permission to cite Wordsworth's sketch (taken from his own boyish remembrance of the case) describing the first gipsy-like entrance of the brilliant parson and his household into Grasmere — so equally out of harmony with the decorums of his sacred character and the splendors of his past life: —

Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be crossed;
And into most of these secluded vales
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So at his dwelling-place the priest arriv'd,
With store of household goods in panniers slung
On sturdy horses, graced with jingling bells;
And, on the back of more ignoble beast,
That, with like burthen of effects most priz'd
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
Young was I then, a schoolboy of eight years:
But still methinks I see them as they pass'd
In order — drawing toward their wish'd-for-home.
Rock'd by the motion of a trusty ass,
Two ruddy children hung, a well-pois'd freight —
Each in his basket nodding drowsily.
Their bonnets, I remember, wreath'd with flowers,
Which told it was the pleasant month of June.

And close behind the comely matron rode —
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
And with a lady's mien. — From far they came,
Even from Northumbrian hills: yet theirs had been
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheer'd
By music, pranks, and laughter-stirring jest;
And freak put on, and arch word dropp'd — to swell
That cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
Which gathered round the slowly moving train.
"Whence do they come? and with what errand charged?
Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
Who pitch their tents under the greenwood tree?
Or strollers are they, fitted to enact
Fair Rosamond and the Children of the Wood?
When the next village hears the show announc'd
By blast of trumpet?" Plenteous was the growth
Of such conjectures — overheard or seen
On many a staring countenance portray'd
Of boor or burgher, as they march'd along.
And more than once their steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humor, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone,
By some staid guardian of the public peace,
Checking the sober horse on which he rode,
In his suspicious wisdom; oftener still
By notice indirect or blunt demand
From traveller halting in his own despite,
A simple curiosity to ease: —
Of which adventures, that beguil'd and cheer'd
Their grave migration, the good pair would tell
With undiminished glee in hoary age.'

Meantime the lady of the house embellished it with feminine skill; and the homely pastor — for such he had now become — not having any great weight of spiritual duties, busied himself in rural labors and rural sports. But was his mind, though bending submissively to his lot, changed in conformity to his task? No:

'For he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropp'd, few pleasures lost;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold —
Anger and indignation. Still he lov'd
The sound of titl'd names, and talked in glee
Of long past banquetings with high-born friends:
Then from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uprous'd by recollected injury, rail'd
At their false ways disdainfully and oft
In bitterness and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incens'd beneath its hoary brow.
Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.'

Such was the tenor of their lives; such the separate character of their manners and dispositions; and, with unusual quietness of course, both were sailing placidly to their final haven. Death had not visited their happy mansion through a space of forty years — 'sparing both old and young in that abode.' But calms so deep are ominous — immunities so profound are terrific. Suddenly the signal was given, and all lay desolate.

'Not twice had fall'n
On those high peaks the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long privileg'd house left empty; swept
As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.'

The aged pastor's wife, his son, one of his daughters

and 'a little smiling grandson,' all had gone within a brief series of days. These composed the entire household in Grasmere, (the others having dispersed, or married away;) and all were gone but himself, by very many years the oldest of the whole: he still survived. And the whole valley, nay, all the valleys round about, speculated with a tender interest upon what course the desolate old man would take for his support.

'All gone, all vanished! he, deprived and bare,
How will he face the remnant of his life;
What will become of him? we said, and mus'd
In sad conjectures. — Shall we meet him now,
Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
Striving to entertain the lonely hours
With music? [for he had not ceas'd to touch
The harp or viol, which himself had fram'd
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.]
What titles will he keep? Will he remain
Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
A planter, and a rearer from the seed?'

Yes; he persevered in all his pursuits; intermitted none of them; weathered a winter in solitude; once more beheld the glories of a spring, and the resurrection of the flowers upon the graves of his beloved; held out even through the depths of summer into the cheerful season of haymaking, (a season much later in Westmoreland than in the south); took his rank, as heretofore, amongst the haymakers; sat down at noon for a little rest to his aged limbs, and found even a deeper rest than he was expecting; for, in a moment of time, without a warning, without a struggle, and without a groan, he did indeed rest from his labors for ever. He,

'With his cheerful throng
Of open projects, and his inward hoard

Of unsunn'd griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown,
Softly and lightly; from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass —
The warm lap of his mother earth; and so,
Their lenient term of separation pass'd,
That family — . . . . . .
By yet a higher privilege — once more
Were gathered to each other.'

Two surviving members of the family, a son and a daughter, I knew intimately. Both have been long dead; but the children of the daughter — grandsons, therefore, to the patriarch here recorded — are living prosperously, and do honor to the interesting family they represent.

The other family were, if less *generally* interesting by their characters or accomplishments, much more so by the circumstances of their position; and that member of the family with whom accident and neighborhood had brought me especially connected, was, in her intellectual capacity, probably superior to most of those whom I have had occasion to record. Had no misfortunes settled upon her life prematurely, and with the benefit of a little judicious guidance to her studies, I am of opinion that she would have been a most distinguished person. Her situation, when I came to know her, was one of touching interest. I will state the circumstances: — She was the sole and illegitimate daughter of a country gentleman: and was a favorite with her father, as she well deserved to be, in a degree so excessive — so nearly idolatrous — that I never heard illustrations of it mentioned but that secretly I trembled for the endurance of so perilous a love under the common accidents of life, and still more under the unusual difficulties and snares of her peculiar situation.

Her father was, by birth, breeding, and property, a Leicestershire farmer; not, perhaps, what you would strictly call a gentleman, for he affected no refinements of manner, but rather courted the exterior of a bluff, careless yeoman. Still he was of that class whom all people, even then, on his letters, addressed as *esquire:* he had an ample income, and was surrounded with all the luxuries of modern life. In early life — and that was the sole palliation of his guilt — (and yet, again, in another view, aggravated it) — he had allowed himself to violate his own conscience in a way which, from the hour of his error, never ceased to pursue him with remorse, and which was, in fact, its own avenger. Mr. K—— was a favorite specimen of English yeomanly beauty: a fine athletic figure; and with features handsome, well moulded, frank and generous in their expression, and in a striking degree manly. In fact, he might have sat for Robin Hood. It happened that a young lady of his own neighborhood, somewhere near Mount Soril I think, fell desperately in love with him. Oh! blindness of the human heart! how deeply did she come to rue the day when she first turned her thoughts to him! At first, however, her case seemed a hopeless one; for she herself was remarkably plain, and Mr. K—— was profoundly in love with the very handsome daughter of a neighboring farmer. One advantage, however, there was on the side of this plain girl: she was rich; and part of her wealth or of her expectations, lay in landed property, that would effect a very tempting *arrondissement* of an estate belonging to Mr. K——. Through what course the affair travelled, I never heard more particularly, than that Mr. K—— was besieged and worried out of his steady mind by the solicitations of aunts and other relations, who had all adopted the cause of the heiress. But what

finally availed to extort a reluctant consent from him was, the representation made by the young lady's family, and backed by medical men, that she was seriously in danger of dying, unless Mr. K—— would make her his wife. He was no coxcomb; but, when he heard all his own female relations calling him a murderer, and taxing him with having, at times, given some encouragement to the unhappy lovesick girl, in an evil hour he agreed to give up his own sweetheart and marry her. He did so. But no sooner was this fatal step taken than it was repented. His love returned in bitter excess for the girl whom he had forsaken, and with frantic remorse. This girl, at length, by the mere force of his grief, he actually persuaded to live with him as his wife; and when, in spite of all concealments, the fact began to transpire, and the angry wife, in order to break off the connection, obtained his consent to their quitting Leicestershire altogether, and transferring their whole establishment to the Lakes, Mr. K—— evaded the whole object of this manœuvre by secretly contriving to bring her rival also into Westmoreland. Her, however, he placed in another vale; and, for some years, it is pretty certain that Mrs. K—— never suspected the fact. Some said that it was her pride which would not allow her to seem conscious of so great an affront to herself; others, better skilled in deciphering the meaning of manners, steadfastly affirmed that she was in happy ignorance of an arrangement known to all the country beside.

Years passed on; and the situation of the poor wife became more and more gloomy. During those years, she brought her husband no children; on the other hand, her hated rival *had:* Mr. K—— saw growing up about his table two children, a son, and then a daughter, who, in their childhood, must have been beautiful creatures; for

the son, when I knew him in after life, though bloated and disfigured a good deal by intemperance, was still a very fine young man; more athletic even than his father; and presenting his father's handsome English yeoman's face, exalted by a Roman dignity in some of the features. The daughter was of the same cast of person; tall, and Roman also in the style of her face. In fact, the brother and the sister would have offered a fine impersonation of Coriolanus and Valeria. This Roman bias of the features a little affected the feminine loveliness of the daughter's appearance. But still, as the impression was not very decided, she would have been pronounced anywhere a very captivating young woman. These were the two crowns of Mr. K——'s felicity, that for seventeen or eighteen years made the very glory of his life. But Nemesis was on his steps; and one of these very children she framed the scourge which made the day of his death a happy deliverance, for which he had long hungered and thirsted. But I anticipate. About the time when I came to reside in Grasmere, some little affair of local business one night drew Wordsworth up to Mr. K——'s house. It was called, and with great propriety, from the multitude of holly trees that still survived from ancient days, *The Hollens;* which pretty local name Mrs. K——, in her general spirit of vulgar sentimentality, had changed to *Holly Grove.*

The place, spite of its slipshod novelish name, which might have led one to expect a corresponding style of tinsel finery, and a display of childish purposes, about its furniture or its arrangements, was really simple and unpretending; whilst its situation was, in itself, a sufficient ground of interest; for it stood on a little terrace running like an artificial gallery or corridor, along the final, and all but perpendicular, descent of the mighty Fair-

field.* It seemed as if it must require iron bolts to pin it to the rock, which rose so high, and, apparently, so close behind. Not until you reached the little esplanade upon which the modest mansion stood, were you aware of a little area interposed between the rear of the house and the rock, just sufficient for ordinary domestic offices. The house was otherwise interesting to myself, from recalling one in which I had passed part of my infancy. As in that, you entered by a rustic hall, fitted up so as to make a beautiful little breakfasting-room: the distribution of the passages was pretty nearly the same; and there were other resemblances. Mr. K—— received us with civility and hospitality — checked, however, and embarrassed, by a very evident reserve. The reason of this was, partly, that he distrusted the feelings, towards himself, of two scholars; but more, perhaps, that he had something beyond this general jealousy for distrusting Wordsworth. He had been a very extensive planter of larches, which were then recently introduced into the Lake country; and where, in every direction, displacing the native forest scenery, and dismally disfiguring this most lovely region; and this

* '*Mighty Fairfield.*'

And Mighty Fairfield, with her chime
Of echoes, still was keeping time.

WORDSWORTH'S 'WAGGONER.'

I have retained the English name of Fairfield; but, when I was studying Danish, I stumbled upon the true meaning of the name, unlocked by that language; and reciprocally (as one amongst other instances which I met at the very threshold of my studies) unlocking the fact that Danish (or Icelandic rather) is the master-key to the local names and dialect of Westmoreland. *Faar* is a sheep: *fald* a hill. But are not all the hills sheep hills? No; Fairfield only amongst all its neighbors, has large, smooth, pastoral savannas, to which the sheep resort when all the rocky or barren neighbors are left desolate.

effect was necessarily in its worst excess during the infancy of the larch plantations; both because they took the formal arrangement of nursery grounds, until extensive thinnings, as well as storms, had begun to break this hideous stiffness in the lines and angles, and also because the larch is a mean tree, both in form and coloring, (having a bright gosling glare in spring, a wet blanket hue in autumn,) as long as it continues a young tree. Not until it has seen forty or fifty winters does it begin to toss its boughs about with a wild Alpine grace. Wordsworth, for many years, had systematically abused the larches and the larch planters; and there went about the country a pleasant anecdote, in connection with this well-known habit of his, which I have often heard repeated by the woodmen — viz. that, one day, when he believed himself to be quite alone — but was, in fact, surveyed coolly, during the whole process of his passions, by a reposing band of laborers in the shade, and at their noontide meal — Wordsworth, on finding a whole cluster of birch-trees grubbed up, and preparations making for the installation of larches in their place, was seen advancing to the spot with gathering wrath in his eyes; next he was heard pouring out an interrupted litany of comminations and maledictions; and, finally, as his eye rested upon the four or five larches which were already beginning to 'dress the line' of the new battalion, he seized his own hat in a transport of fury, and launched it against the odious intruders. Mr. K—— had, doubtless, heard of Wordsworth's frankness upon this theme, and knew himself to be, as respected Grasmere, the sole offender.

In another way, also, he had earned a few random shots from Wordsworth's wrath — viz. as the erector of a huge unsightly barn, built solely for convenience, and so far violating all the modesty of rustic proportions, that it was

really an eyesore in the valley. These considerations, and others beside, made him reserved; but he felt the silent appeal to his *lares* from the strangers' presence, and was even kind in his courtesies. Suddenly, Mrs. K—— entered the room — instantly his smile died away: he did not even mention her name. Wordsworth, however, she knew slightly; and to me she introduced herself. Mr. K—— seemed almost impatient when I rose and presented her with my chair. Anything that detained her in the room for a needless moment seemed to him a nuisance. She, on the other hand — what was *her* behavior? I had been told that she worshipped the very ground on which he trod; and so, indeed, it appeared. This adoring love might, under other circumstances, have been beautiful to contemplate; but here it impressed unmixed disgust. Imagine a woman of very homely features, and farther disfigured by a scorbutic eruption, fixing a tender gaze upon a burly man of forty, who showed, by every word, look, gesture, movement, that he disdained her. In fact, nothing could be more injudicious than her deportment towards him. Everybody must feel that a man who hates any person, hates that person the more for troubling him with expressions of love; or, at least, it adds to hatred the sting of disgust. That was the fixed language of Mr. K——'s manner, in relation to his wife. He was not a man to be pleased with foolish fondling endearments, from any woman, before strangers; but from her! Faugh! he said internally, at every instant. His very eyes he averted from her: not once did he look at her, though forced into the odious necessity of speaking to her several times; and, at length, when she seemed disposed to construe our presence as a sort of brief privilege to her own, he adopted that same artifice for ridding himself of her detested company, which has sometimes

done seasonable service to a fine gentleman when called upon by ladies for the explanation of a Greek word — he hinted to her, pretty broadly, that the subject of our conversation was not altogether proper for female ears; very much to the astonishment of Wordsworth and myself.

CHAPTER XX.

SOCIETY OF THE LAKES.

It was at Mr. Wordsworth's house that I first became acquainted with Professor (then Mr.) Wilson, of Elleray. I have elsewhere described the impression which he made upon me at my first acquaintance; and it is sufficiently known, from other accounts of Mr. Wilson, (as, for example, that written by Mr. Lockhart in 'Peter's Letters,') that he divided his time and the utmost sincerity of his love between literature and the stormiest pleasures of real life. Cock-fighting, wrestling, pugilistic contests, boat-racing, horse-racing, all enjoyed Mr. Wilson's patronage; all were occasionally honored by his personal participation. I mention this in no unfriendly spirit toward Professor Wilson; on the contrary, these propensities grew out of his ardent temperament and his constitutional endowments — his strength, speed, and agility: and being confined to the period of youth — for I am speaking of a period removed by five-and-twenty years — can do him no dishonor amongst the candid and the judicious. '*Non lusisse pudet, sed non incidere ludum.*' The truth was, that Professor Wilson had in him, at that period of life, something of the old English chivalric feeling which our old ballad poetry agrees in ascribing to Robin Hood. Several men of genius have expressed to me, at different times, the delight they had in the traditional character of

Robin Hood: he has no resemblance to the old heroes of Continental romance in one important feature; they are uniformly victorious: and this gives even a tone of monotony to the Continental poems: for, let them involve their hero in what dangers they may, the reader still feels them to be as illusory as those which menace an enchanter — an Astolpho, for instance, who, by one blast of his horn, can dissipate an army of opponents. But Robin is frequently beaten: he never declines a challenge; sometimes he courts one; and occasionally he learns a lesson from some proud tinker or masterful beggar, the moral of which teaches him that there are better men in the world than himself. What follows? Is the brave man angry with his stout-hearted antagonist, because he is no less brave and a little stronger than himself? Not at all; he insists on making him a present, on giving him a *dejeuner à la fourchette*, and (in case he is disposed to take service in the forest) finally adopts him into his band of archers. Much the same spirit governed, in his earlier years, Professor Wilson. And, though a man of prudence cannot altogether approve of his throwing himself into the convivial society of gipsies, tinkers, potters,* strolling players, &c.; nevertheless, it tells altogether in favor of Professor Wilson's generosity of mind, that he was ever ready to forego his advantages of station and birth, and to throw himself fearlessly upon his own native powers, as man opposed to man. Even at Oxford he fought an aspiring shoemaker repeatedly, which is creditable to both sides; for the very *prestige* of the gown is already overpowering to the artisan from the beginning, and he is half beaten by terror at his own presumption. Elsewhere he sought out, or, at least

* *Potter* is the local term in northern England for a hawker of earthen ware, many of which class lead a vagrant life, and encamp during the summer months like gipsies.

did not avoid the most dreaded of the local heroes; and fought his way through his 'most verdant years,' taking or giving defiances to the right and the left in perfect carelessness, as chance or occasion offered. No man could well show more generosity in these struggles, nor more magnanimity in reporting their issue, which naturally went many times against him. But Mr. Wilson neither sought to disguise the issue nor showed himself at all displeased with it: even brutal ill-usage did not seem to have left any vindictive remembrance of itself. These features of his character, however, and these propensities which naturally belonged merely to the transitional state from boyhood to manhood, would have drawn little attention on their own account, had they not been relieved and emphatically contrasted by his passion for literature, and the fluent command which he soon showed over a rich and voluptuous poetic diction. In everything Mr. Wilson showed himself an Athenian. Athenians were all lovers of the cockpit; and, howsoever shocking to the sensibilities of modern refinement, we have no doubt that Plato was a frequent better at cock-fights; and Socrates is known to have bred cocks himself. If there were any Athenian, however, in particular, it was Alcibiades; for he had his marvellous versatility; and to the Windermere neighborhood in which he had settled, this versatility came recommended by something of the very same position in society — the same wealth, the same social temper, the same jovial hospitality. No person was better fitted to win or to maintain a high place in social esteem; for he could adapt himself to all companies; and the wish to conciliate and to win his way by flattering the self-love of others, was so predominant over all personal self-love and vanity

> 'That *he* did in the general bosom reign
> Of young and old.'

Mr. Wilson and most of his family I had already known for six years. We had projected journeys together through Spain and Greece, all of which had been nipped in the bud by Napoleon's furious and barbarous mode of making war. It was no joke, as it had been in past times, for an Englishman to be found wandering in continental regions; the pretence that he was, or might be, a spy — a charge so easy to make, so impossible to throw off — at once sufficed for the hanging of the unhappy traveller. In one of his Spanish bulletins, Napoleon even boasted * of having hanged sixteen Englishmen, 'merchants or others of that nation,' whom he taxed with no suspicion even of being suspected, beyond the simple fact of being detected in the act of breathing Spanish air. These atrocities had interrupted our continental schemes; and we were thus led the more to roam amongst home scenes. How it happened I know not — for we had wandered together often in England — but, by some accident, it was not until 1814 that we visited Edinburgh together. Then it was that I first saw Scotland.

I remember a singular incident which befell us on the road. Breakfasting together, before starting, at Mr. Wilson's place of Elleray, we had roamed, through a long and delightful day, by way of Ulleswater, &c. Reaching Penrith at night, we slept there; and in the morning, as we were sunning ourselves in the street, we saw, seated in an arm-chair, and dedicating himself to the self-same task of *apricating* his jolly personage, a rosy, jovial, portly man, having something of the air of a Quaker. Good nature was clearly his predominating quality; and, as that happened to be our foible also, we

* This brutal boast might, after all, be a falsehood; and, with respect to mere numbers, probably was so

soon fell into talk; and from that into reciprocations of good will; and from those into a direct proposal, on our new friend's part, that we should set out upon our travels together. How — whither — to what end or object — seemed as little to enter into his speculations as the cost of realizing them. Rare it is, in this business world of ours, to find any man in so absolute a state of indifference and neutrality, that for him all quarters of the globe, and all points of the compass, are self-balanced by philosophic equilibrium of choice. There seemed to us something amusing and yet monstrous in such a man; and, perhaps, had we been in the same condition of exquisite indetermination, to this hour we might all have been staying together at Penrith. We, however, were previously bound to Edinburgh; and, as soon as this was explained to him, that way he proposed to accompany us. We took a chaise, therefore, jointly, to Carlisle; and, during the whole eighteen miles, he astonished us by the wildest and most frantic displays of erudition, much of it levelled at Sir Isaac Newton. Much philosophical learning also he exhibited; but the grotesque accompaniment of the whole was, that, after every bravura, he fell back into his corner in fits of laughter at himself. We began to find out the unhappy solution of his indifference and purposeless condition; he was a lunatic; and, afterwards, we had reason to suppose that he was now a fugitive from his keepers. At Carlisle he became restless and suspicious; and, finally, upon some real or imaginary business, he turned aside to Whitehaven. We were not the objects of his jealousy; for he parted with us reluctantly and anxiously. On our part, we felt our pleasure overcast by sadness; for we had been much amused by his conversation, and could not but respect the philological learning which he had displayed. But one thing was whimsical

enough: Wilson purposely said some startling things — startling in point of decorum, or gay pleasantries, *contr bonos mores;* at every sally of which, he looked as awfully shocked as though he himself had not been holding the most licentious talk in another key, licentious as respected all truth of history or of science. Another illustration, in fact, he furnished of what I have so often heard Coleridge say — that lunatics, in general, so far from being the brilliant persons they are thought, and having a preternatural brightness of fancy, usually are the very dullest and most uninspired of mortals. The sequel of our poor friend's history — for the apparent goodness of his nature had interested us both in his fortunes, and caused us to inquire after him through all probable channels — was, that he was last seen by a Cambridge man of our acquaintance, but under circumstances which confirmed our worst fears: it was in a stage-coach; and, at first, the Cantab suspected nothing amiss; but some accident of conversation being started, the topic of La Place's *Mechanique Celeste*, off flew our jolly Penrith friend in a tirade against Sir Isaac Newton; so that at once we recognized him, as the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' his 'cosmogony friend' in prison; but — and that was melancholy to hear — this tirade was suddenly checked, in the rudest manner, by a brutal fellow in one corner of the carriage, who, as it now appeared, was attending him as a regular keeper; and, according to the custom of such people, always laid an interdict upon every ebullition of fancy or animated thought. He was a man whose mind had got some wheel entangled, or some spring overloaded, but else, was a learned and able person; and he was to be silent at the bidding of a low, brutal fellow, incapable of distinguishing between the gayeties of fancy and the wandering of the intellect. Sad fate! and sad inversion

of the natural relations between the accomplished scholar and the rude illiterate boor!

Of Edinburgh I thought to have spoken at length. But I pause, and retreat from the subject, when I remember that so many of those whom I loved and honored at that time — some, too, among the gayest of the gay — are now lying in their graves. Of Professor Wilson's sisters, the youngest, at that time a child almost, and standing at the very vestibule of womanhood, is alone living; she has had a romantic life; has twice traversed, with no attendance but her servants, the gloomy regions of the Caucasus; and once with a young child by her side. Her husband, Mr. M'Neill, is now the English Envoy at the court of Teheran. On the rest, one of whom I honored and loved as a sister, the curtain has fallen; and here, in the present mood of my spirits, I also feel disposed to drop a curtain over my subsequent memoirs. Farewell, hallowed recollections!

Thus, I have sketched the condition of the lake district, as to society of an intellectual order, at the time, (viz. the winter of 1808 – 9,) when I became a personal resident in that district; and, indeed, from this era, through a period of about twenty years in succession, I may describe my domicile as being amongst the lakes and mountains of Westmoreland. It is true, I often made excursions to London, Bath, and its neighborhood, or northwards to Edinburgh; and, perhaps, on an average, passed one-fourth part of each year at a distance from this district; but here only it was that henceforwards I had a house and small establishment. The house, for a very long course of years, was that same cottage in Grasmere, embowered in roses and jessamine, which I have already described as a spot hallowed to the admirers of Mr Wordsworth by his seven years' occupation of its pretty

chambers and its rocky orchard: a little domain, which he has himself apostrophized as the 'lowest stair in that magnificent temple,' forming the north-eastern boundary of Grasmere. The little orchard is rightly called 'the lowest stair;' for within itself, all is ascending ground; hardly enough of flat area on which to pitch a pavilion, and even that scanty surface an inclined plane; whilst the rest of the valley, into which you step immediately from the garden gate, is (according to the characteristic beauty of the northern English valleys, as first noticed by Mr. Wordsworth himself) 'flat as the floor of a temple.'

In sketching the state of the literary society gathered or gathering about the English lakes, at the time of my settling amongst them, I have of course authorized the reader to suppose that I personally mixed freely amongst the whole; else I should have had neither the means for describing that society with truth, nor any motive for attempting it. Meantime, the direct object of my own residence at the lakes was the society of Mr. Wordsworth. And it will be a natural inference that, if I mingled on familiar or friendly terms with this society, *à fortiori* would Mr. Wordsworth do so, as belonging to the lake district by birth, and as having been, in some instances, my own introducer to members of this community. But it was not so; and never was a grosser blunder committed than by Lord Byron, when in a letter to Mr. Hogg, (from which an extract is given in some volume of Mr Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott,') he speaks of Wordsworth, Southey, &c., in connection with Sir Walter, as all alike injured by mixing only with little adoring coteries, which each severally was supposed to have gathered about himself as a centre. Now, had this really been the case, I know not how the objects of such a

partial or exclusive admiration could have been injured by it in any sense with which the public were concerned. A writer may — and of that there are many instances — write the worse for meeting nobody of sympathy with himself; no admiration sufficient to convince him that he has written powerfully; that misfortune, when it occurs, may injure a writer, or may cause him to cease cultivating his genius. But no man was ever injured by the strong reflection of his own power in love and admiration; not as a writer, I mean: though it is very true, from the great variety of modes in which praise, or the indirect flattery of silent homage, acts upon different minds, that some men may be injured as social companions: vanity, and, still more, egotism— the habit of making self the central point of reference, in every treatment of every subject — may certainly be cherished by the idolatry of a private circle, continually ascending; but arrogance and gloomy anti-social pride are qualities much more likely to be favored by sympathy withheld, and the unjust denial of a man's pretensions. This, however, need not be discussed with any reference to Mr. Wordsworth; for he had no such admiring circle: no applauding coterie ever gathered about him. Wordsworth was not a man to be openly flattered; his pride repelled that kind of homage, or any homage that offered itself with the air of conferring honor; and repelled it in a tone of loftiness or arrogance that never failed to kindle the pride of the baffled flatterer. Nothing in the way of applause could give Wordsworth any pleasure, unless it were the spontaneous and half-unconscious utterance of delight in some passage — the implicit applause of love, half afraid to express itself; or else the deliberate praise of rational examination, study, and comparison, applied to his writings: these were the only modes of admiration which could recommend them-

selves to Wordsworth. But had it been otherwise, there was another mistake in what Lord Byron said: — the neighboring people, in every degree, 'gentle and simple,' literary or half-educated, who had heard of Wordsworth, agreed in despising him. Never had poet or prophet less honor in his own country. Of the gentry, very few knew anything about Wordsworth. Grasmere was a vale little visited at that time, except for an hour's admiration. The case is now altered; and partly by a new road, which, having pierced the valley by a line carried along the water's edge, at a most preposterous cost, and with a large arrear of debt for the next generation, saves the labor of surmounting a laborious hill. The case is now altered no less for the intellect of the age; and Rydal Mount is now one of the most honored abodes in the island. But, at that time, Grasmere did not differ more from the Grasmere of to-day than Wordsworth from the Wordsworth of 1809–20. I repeat that he was little known, even as a resident in the country; and, as a poet, strange it would have been had the little town of Ambleside undertaken to judge for itself, and against a tribunal which had for a time subdued the very temper of the age. Lord Byron might have been sure that nowhere would the contempt for Mr. Wordsworth be rifer than exactly amongst those who had a local reason for curiosity about the man, and who, of course, adopting the tone of the presiding journals, adopted them with a personality of feeling unknown elsewhere.

Except, therefore, with the Lloyds, or occasionally with Thomas Wilkinson the Quaker, or very rarely with Southey, Wordsworth had no intercourse at all beyond the limits of Grasmere: and in that valley I was myself, for some years, his sole visiting friend; as, on the other hand, my sole visitors as regarded that vale, were himself and his family.

Among that family, and standing fourth in the series of his children, was a little girl, whose life, short as it was, and whose death, obscure and little heard of as it was amongst all the rest of the world, connected themselves with the records of my own life by ties of passion so profound, by a grief so frantic, and so memorable through the injurious effects which it produced of a physical kind, that, had I left untouched every other chapter of my own experience, I should certainly have left behind some memorandum of this, as having a permanent interest in the psychological history of human nature. Luckily the facts are not without a parallel, and in well authenticated medical books; else I should have scrupled, (as what man does *not* scruple who values, above all things, the reputation for veracity?) to throw the whole stress of credibility on my own unattached narration. But all experienced physicians know well that cases similar to mine, though not common, occur at intervals in every large community.

When I first settled in Grasmere, Catherine Wordsworth was in her infancy; but, even at that age, noticed me more than any other person, excepting, of course, her mother. She had for an attendant a young girl, perhaps thirteen years old — Sarah, one of the orphan children left by the unfortunate couple, George and Sarah Green, whose tragical end in a snow-storm I have already narrated. This Sarah Green was as far removed in character as could be imagined from that elder sister who had won so much admiration in her childish days, by her premature display of energy and household virtues. She was lazy, luxurious, and sensual: one, in fact, of those nurses who, in their anxiety to gossip about young men, leave their infant or youthful charges to the protection of chance. It was, however, not in her out-of-door ram-

dlings, but at home, that the accident occurred which determined the fortunes of little Catherine. Mr. Coleridge was, at that time, a visitor to the Wordsworths at Allan Bank, that house in Grasmere to which Wordsworth had removed upon quitting his cottage. One day about noon, when, perhaps, he was coming down to breakfast, Mr. Coleridge passed Sarah Green, playing after her indolent fashion with the child; and between them lay a number of carrots. He warned the girl that raw carrots were an indigestible substance for the stomach of an infant. This warning was neglected: little Catherine ate —it was never known how many; and, in a short time, was seized with strong convulsions. I saw her in this state about two P. M. No medical aid was to be had nearer than Ambleside; about six miles distant. However, all proper measures were taken; and, by sunset, she had so far recovered as to be pronounced out of danger. Her left side, however, left arm, and left leg, from that time forward, were in a disabled state: not what could be called paralyzed, but suffering a sort of atony or imperfect distribution of vital power. Catherine was not above three years old when she died; so that there could not have been much room for the expansion of her understanding, or the unfolding of her real character. But there was room enough in her short life, and too much, for love the most frantic to settle upon her. The whole vale of Grasmere is not large enough to allow of any great distances between house and house; and as it happened that little Kate Wordsworth returned my love, she in a manner lived with me at my solitary cottage; as often as I could entice her from home, walked with me, slept with me, and was my sole companion. That I was not singular in describing some witchery to the nature and manners of this innocent child, you may gather from the following

most beautiful lines extracted from a sketch * towards her portraiture, drawn by her father, (with whom, however, she was noways a favorite) : —

> 'And as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
> Not less if unattended and alone
> Than when both young and old sit gather'd round,
> And take delight in its activity;
> Even so this happy creature of herself
> Was all sufficient : Solitude to her
> Was blithe society, who fill'd the air
> With gladness and involuntary songs.
> Light were her sallies as the tripping fawn's,
> Forth startled from the form where she lay couch'd;
> Unthought of, unexpected, as the stir
> Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow flowers;
> Or from before it chasing wantonly
> The many-color'd images impress'd
> Upon the bosom of a placid lake.'

It was this radiant spirit of joyousness, making solitude for her blithe society, and filling from morning to night the air 'with gladness and involuntary songs,' this it was which so fascinated my heart, that I became blindly, doatingly, in a servile degree, devoted to this one affection.

* It is entitled 'Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old;' and is dated at the foot 1811, which must be an oversight, for she was not so old until the following year. I may as well add the first six lines, though I had a reason for beginning the extract where it does, in order to fix the attention upon the special circumstance which had so much fascinated myself, of her all-sufficiency to herself, and the way in which she 'filled the air with gladness and involuntary songs.' The other lines are these :

> 'Loving she is and tractable, though wild;
> And Innocence hath privilege in her
> To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
> And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
> Of trespasses, affected to provoke
> Mock chastisement and partnership in play.'

in the spring of 1812, I went up to London; and, early in June, by a letter from Miss Wordsworth, her aunt, I learned the terrific news, (for such to me it was,) that she had died suddenly. She had gone to bed in good health about sunset on June 4th; was found speechless a little before midnight; and died in the early dawn, just as the first gleams of morning began to appear above Seat Sandel and Fairfield, the mightiest of the Grasmere barriers, about an hour, perhaps, before sunrise. Never, perhaps, from the foundations of those mighty hills, was there so fierce a convulsion of grief as mastered my faculties on receiving that heart-shattering news. Over and above my excess of love for her, I had always viewed her as an impersonation of the dawn and the spirit of infancy; and this abstraction seated in her person, together with the visionary sort of connection, which, even in her parting hours, she assumed with the summer sun, by timing her immersion into the cloud of death with the rising and setting of that fountain of life — these combined impressions recoiled so violently into a contrast or polar antithesis to the image of death, that each exalted and brightened the other. I returned hastily to Grasmere; stretched myself every night, for more than two months running, upon her grave; in fact, often passed the night upon her grave; not (as may readily be supposed) in any parade of grief; on the contrary, in that quiet valley of simple shepherds, I was secure enough from observation until morning light began to return; but in mere intensity of sick, frantic yearning after neighborhood to the darling of my heart.

Many readers will have seen in Sir Walter Scott's 'Demonology,' and in Dr. Abercrombie's 'Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers,' some remarkable illustrations of the creative faculties awakened in the eye or other

organs by peculiar states of passion; and it is worthy of a place amongst cases of that nature, that, in many solitary fields, at a considerable elevation above the level of the valleys — fields which, in the local dialect, are called 'intacks,' — my eye was haunted at times, in broad noonday, (oftener, however, in the afternoon,) with a facility, but at times also with a necessity, for weaving, out of a few simple elements, a perfect picture of little Kate in the attitude and onward motion of walking. I resorted constantly to these 'intacks,' as places where I was little liable to disturbance; and usually I saw her at the opposite side of the field, which might sometimes be at a distance of a quarter of a mile, generally not so much. Always almost she carried a basket on her head; and usually the first hint upon which the figure arose commenced in wild plants, such as tall ferns, or the purple flowers of the foxglove; but, whatever might be the colors or the forms, uniformly the same little full-formed figure arose, uniformly dressed in the little blue bed-gown and black skirt of Westmoreland, and uniformly with the air of advancing motion. Through part of June, July, and part of August, in fact throughout the summer, this frenzy of grief continued. It was reasonably to be expected that nature would avenge such senseless self-surrender to passion; for, in fact, so far from making an effort to resist it, I clung to it as a luxury, (which, in the midst of suffering, it really was in part.) All at once, on a day at the latter end of August, in one instant of time, I was seized with some nervous sensation that, for a moment, caused sickness. A glass of brandy removed the sickness; but I felt, to my horror, a sting as it were, of some stationary torment left behind — a torment absolutely indescribable, but under which I felt assured that life could not be borne. It is useless and impossible to describe what followed

with no apparent illness discoverable to any medical eye — looking, indeed, better than usual for three months and upwards, I was under the possession of some internal nervous malady, that made each respiration which I drew an act of separate anguish. I travelled southwards immediately to Liverpool, to Birmingham, to Bristol, to Bath, for medical advice; and finally rested — in a gloomy state of despair, rather because I saw no use in further change, than that I looked for any change in this place more than others — at Clifton, near Bristol. Here it was, at length, in the course of November, that, in one hour, my malady began to leave me: it was not quite so abrupt, however, in its departure, as in its first development: a peculiar sensation arose from the knee downwards, about midnight: it went forwards through a space of about five hours, and then stopped, leaving me perfectly free from every trace of the awful malady which had possessed me; but so much debilitated as with difficulty to stand or walk. Going down soon after this, to Ilfracombe, in Devonshire, where there were hot sea baths, I found it easy enough to restore my shattered strength. But the remarkable fact in this catastrophe of my illness is, that all grief for little Kate Wordsworth, nay, all remembrance of her, had, with my malady, vanished from my mind. The traces of her innocent features were utterly washed away from my heart: she might have been dead for a thousand years, so entirely abolished was the last lingering image of her face or figure. The little memorials of her, which her mother had given to me, as in particular, a pair of her red morocco shoes, won not a sigh from me as I looked at them: even her little grassy grave, white with snow, when I returned to Grasmere in January, 1813, was looked at almost with indifference; except, indeed, as now become a memorial to me of that

dire internal physical convulsion thence arising, by which I had been shaken and wrenched; and, in short, a case more entirely realizing the old Pagan superstition of a nympholepsy in the first place, and, secondly, of a Lethe or river of oblivion, and the possibility, by one draught from this potent stream, of applying an everlasting ablution to all the soils and stains of human anguish, I do not suppose the psychological history of man affords.

From the Lakes, as I have mentioned before, I went annually southwards — chiefly to Somersetshire or to London, and more rarely to Edinburgh. In my Somersetshire visits, I never failed to see Mrs. Hannah More. My own relative's house, in fact, standing within one mile of Barley Wood, I seldom suffered a week to pass without calling to pay my respects. There was a stronger motive to this than simply what arose from Mrs. H. More's company, or even from that of her sisters, (one or two of whom were more entertaining because more filled with animal spirits and less thoughtful than Mrs. Hannah;) for it rarely happened that one called within the privileged calling hours, which, with these rural ladies, ranged between twelve and four o'clock, but one met some person interesting by rank, station, political or literary eminence.

Here, accordingly, it was, that, during one of my last visits to Somersetshire, either in 1813 or 1814, I met Mrs. Siddons, whom I had often seen upon the stage, but never before in private society. She had come into this part of the country chiefly, I should imagine, with a view to the medical advice at the Bristol Hot Wells and Clifton; for it happened that one of her daughters — a fine interesting young woman — was suffering under pulmonary consumption — that scourge of the British youth; of which malady, I believe, she ultimately died. From the Hot Wells, Mrs. Siddons had been persuaded to honor with her

company a certain Dr. Wh——, whose splendid villa of Mendip Lodge stood about two miles from Barley Wood. This villa, by the way, was a show place, in which a vast deal of money had been sunk, upon two follies equally unproductive of pleasure to the beholder and of anything approaching a pecuniary compensation to the owner. The villa, with its embellishments, was supposed to have cost at least sixty thousand pounds; of which one-half had been absorbed, partly by a contest with the natural obstacles of the situation, and partly by the frailest of all ornaments — vast china jars, vases, and other 'knicknackery' baubles, which held their very existence by so frail a tenure as the carefulness of a housemaid; and which, at all events, if they should survive the accidents of life, never are known to reproduce to the possessor one-tenth part of what they have cost. Out of doors there were terraces of a mile long, one rising above another, and carried, by mere artifice of mechanic skill, along the perpendicular face of a lofty rock. Had they, when finished, any particular beauty? Not at all. Considered as a pleasure ground, they formed a far less delightful landscape, and a far less alluring haunt to rambling steps, than most of the uncostly shrubberies which were seen below, in unpretending situations, and upon the ordinary level of the vale. What a record of human imbecility! For all his pains and his expense in forming this costly 'folly,' his eward was daily anxiety, and one solitary *bon mot* which he used to record of some man, who, on being asked by the Rev. Doctor what he thought of his place, replied, hat 'He thought the Devil had tempted him up to an exceedingly high place.' No part of the grounds, nor the house itself, was at all the better because, originally, it had been, beyond measure, difficult to form it: so difficult that, according to Dr. Johnson's witty remark, on another

occasion, there was good reason for wishing that it had been impossible. The owner, whom I knew, most certainly never enjoyed a happy day in this costly creation; which, after all, displayed but little taste, though a gorgeous array of finery. The show part of the house was itself a monument to the barrenness of invention in him who planned it; consisting, as it did, of one long suite of rooms in a straight line, without variety, without obvious parts, and therefore without symmetry or proportions. This long vista was so managed that, by means of folding-doors, the whole could be seen at a glance, whilst its extent was magnified by a vast mirror at the further end. The Doctor was a querulous old man, enormously tall and enormously bilious; so that he had a spectral appearance when pacing through the false gayeties of his glittering villa. He was a man of letters, and had known Dr. Johnson, whom he admired prodigiously; and had himself been, in earlier days, the author of a poem now forgotten. He belonged, at one period, to the coterie of Miss Seward, Dr. Darwin, Day, Mr. Edgeworth, &c.; consequently he might have been an agreeable companion, having so much anecdote at his command: but his extreme biliousness made him irritable in a painful degree, and impatient of contradiction — impatient even of dissent in the most moderate shape. The latter stage of his life is worth recording, as a melancholy comment upon the blindness of human foresight, and in some degree also as a lesson on the disappointments which follow any departure from high principle, and the deception which seldom fails to lie in ambush for the deceiver. I had one day taken the liberty to ask him why, and with what ultimate purpose, he who did not like trouble and anxiety, had embarrassed himself with the planning and construction of a villa that manifestly embittered his days? 'That is, my young

friend,' replied the doctor, 'speaking plainly, you mean to express your wonder that I, so old a man, (for he was then not far from seventy,) should spend my time in creating a show-box. Well now, I will tell you: precisely because I *am* old. I am naturally of a gloomy turn; and it has always struck me, that we English, who are constitutionally haunted by melancholy, are too apt to encourage it by the gloomy air of the mansions we inhabit. Your fortunate age, my friend, can dispense with such aids: ours require continual influxes of pleasure through the senses, in order to cheat the stealthy advances of old age, and to beguile us of our sadness. Gayety, the *riant* style in everything, that is what we old men need. And I, who do not love the pains of creating, love the creation; and, in fact, require it as part of my artillery against time.'

Such was the amount of his explanation: and now, in a few words, for his subsequent history. Finding himself involved in difficulties by the expenses of this villa, going on concurrently with a large London establishment, he looked out for a good marriage, (being a widower,) as the sole means, within his reach, for clearing off his embarrassments, without proportionable curtailment of his expenses. It happened, unhappily for both parties, that he fell in with a widow lady, who was cruising about the world with precisely the same views, and in precisely the same difficulties. Each (or the friends of each) held out a false flag, magnifying their incomes respectively, and sinking the embarrassments. Mutually deceived, they married: and one change immediately introduced at the splendid villa was, the occupation of an entire wing by a lunatic brother of the lady's; the care of whom, with a large allowance, had been committed to her by the Court of Chancery. This, of itself, shed a

gloom over the place which defeated the primary purpose of the doctor (as explained by himself) in erecting it. Windows barred, maniacal howls, gloomy attendants, from a lunatic hospital, ranging about: these were sad disturbances to the doctor's rose-leaf system of life. This, however, if it were a nuisance, brought along with it some *solatium*, as the lawyers express it, in the shape of the Chancery allowance. But next came the load of debts for which there was no *solatium*, and which turned out to be the only sort of possession with which the lady was well endowed. The disconsolate doctor — an old man, and a clergyman of the establishment — could not resort to such redress as a layman might have adopted: he was obliged to give up all his establishments; his gay villa was offered to Queen Caroline, who would, perhaps, have bought it, but that *her* final troubles in this world were also besetting her about that very time. For the present, therefore, the villa was shut up, and 'left alone with its glory.' The reverend and aged proprietor, now ten times more bilious and more querulous than ever, shipped himself off for France; and there, in one of the southern provinces — so far, therefore, as climate was concerned, realizing his vision of gayety, but for all else the most melancholy of exiles — sick of the world and of himself, hating to live, yet more intensely hating to die, in a short time the unhappy old man breathed his last, in a common lodging house, gloomy and vulgar, and in all things the very antithesis to that splendid abode which he had planned for the consolation of his melancholy, and for the gay beguilement of old age.

At this gentleman's villa, Mrs. Siddons had been paying a visit; for the doctor was a worshipper, in a servile degree, of all things which flourished in the sunshine of the world's applause. To have been the

idolized favorite of nations, to have been an honored and even a privileged* guest at Windsor, that was enough for him; and he did his utmost to do the honors of his neighborhood, not less to glorify himself in the eye of the country, who was fortunate enough to have such a guest, than to show his respect for the distinguished visitor. Mrs. Siddons felt herself flattered by the worthy doctor's splendid hospitalities; for that they were really splendid, may be judged by this fact, communicated to me by Hannah More, viz. that the Bishop of London, (Porteus,) when on a visit to Barley Wood, being much pressed by the doctor to visit him, had at length accepted a dinner invitation. Mrs. Hannah More was, of course, included in the invitation, but had found it impossible to attend, from ill health; and the next morning, at breakfast, the bishop had assured her, that, in all his London experience, in that city of magnificent dinners beyond all other cities of the earth, and amongst the princes of the land, he had never witnessed an entertainment so perfect in its appointments. Gratified as she was, however, by her host's homage, as expressed in his splendid style of entertaining, Mrs. Siddons was evidently more happy in her residence at Barley Wood. The style of conversation pleased her. It was religious: but Mrs. Siddons was herself religious; and at that moment, when waiting with anxiety upon a daughter whose languor seemed but too ominous in her maternal eyes, she was more than usually

* 'A *privileged* guest at Windsor. Mrs. Siddons used to mention, that when she was invited to Windsor Castle, for the purpose of reading before the Queen and her royal daughters, on her first visit, she was ready to sink from weariness under the effort of standing for so long a time; but on some subsequent visit, I have understood that she was allowed to sit, probably on the suggestion of one of the younger ladies.

open to religious impressions, and predisposed to religious topics.

Certain I am, however, from what I then observed, that Mrs. Siddons, in common with many women of rank who were on the list of the Barley Wood visitors, did not apprehend, in their full sense and severity, the peculiar principles of Hannah More. This lady, excellent as she was, and incapable of practising any studied deceit, had, however, an instinct of worldly wisdom, which taught her to refrain from shocking ears polite with too harsh or too broad an exposure of all which she believed. This, at least, if it were any duty of hers, she considered, perhaps, as already fulfilled by her writings; and, moreover, the very tone of good breeding, which she had derived from the good company she had kept, made her feel the impropriety of lecturing her visitors even when she must have thought them in error. Mrs. Siddons obviously thought Hannah More a person who differed from the world chiefly by applying a greater energy, and sincerity, and zeal, to a system of religious truth equally known to all. Repentance, for instance — all people hold that to be a duty; and Mrs. Hannah More differed from them only by holding it to be a duty of all hours, a duty for youth not less than for age. But how much would she have been shocked to hear that Mrs. Hannah More held all repentance, however indispensable, yet in itself, and though followed by the sincerest efforts at reformation of life, to be utterly unavailing as any operative part of the means by which man gains acceptance with God. To rely upon repentance, or upon anything that man can do for himself, that Mrs. Hannah More considered as the mortal taint, as the πρωτον Ψευδος in the worldly theories of the Christian scheme; and I have heard the two ladies — Mrs More and Mrs. Siddons

I mean — talking by the hour together, as completely at cross purposes as it is possible to imagine. Everything in fact of what was special in the creed adopted by Mrs. Hannah More, by Wilberforce, and many others known as evangelical Christians, is always capable, in lax conversation, of being translated into a vague general sense, which completely obscures the true limitations of the meaning.

Mrs. Hannah More, however, was too polished a woman to allow of any sectarian movement being impressed upon the conversation; consequently, she soon directed it to literature, upon which Mrs. Siddons was very amusing, from her recollections of Dr. Johnson, whose fine-turned compliment to herself, (so much in the spirit of those unique compliments addressed to eminent people by Louis XIV.) had for ever planted the Doctor's memory in her heart. She spoke also of Garrick and of Mrs. Garrick; but not, I think, with so much respect and affection as Mrs. Hannah More, who had, in her youthful days, received the most friendly attentions from both, though coming forward at that time in no higher character than as the author of Percy, the most insipid of tragedies. Mrs. Siddons was prevailed on to read passages from both Shakspeare and Milton. The dramatic readings were delightful; in fact, they were almost stage rehearsals, accompanied with appropriate gesticulation. One was the great somnambulist scene in Macbeth, which was the *ne plus ultra* in the whole range of Mrs. Siddons's scenical exhibitions, and can never be forgotten by any man who once had the happiness to witness that immortal performance of the divine artist. Another, given at the request of a Dutch lady, residing in the neighborhood of Barley Wood, was the scene from King John, of the Lady Constance, beginning — 'Gone to be married! gone to

swear a peace!' &c. The last, and truly superb for the musical intonation of the cadences, was that inimitable apology or pleading of Christian charity for Cardinal Wolsey, addressed to his bitterest enemy, Queen Catherine. All these, in different degrees and different ways, were exquisite. But the readings from Milton were not to my taste. And, some weeks after, when, at Mrs. Hannah More's request, I had read to her some of Lord Byron's most popular works, I got her to acknowledge, in then speaking upon the subject of reading, that perhaps the style of Mrs. Siddons's reading had been too much determined to the dramatic cast of emphasis, and the pointed expression of character and situation which must always belong to a speaker bearing a part in a dialogue, to admit of her assuming the tone of a rapt poetic inspiration.

Meantime, whatever she did — whether it were in display of her own matchless talents, but always at the earnest request of the company or of her hostess — or whether it were in gentle acquiescent attention to the display made by others — or whether it were as one member of a general party, taking her part occasionally, for the amusement of the rest, and contributing to the general fund of social pleasure — nothing could exceed the amiable, kind, and unassuming deportment of Mrs. Siddons. She had retired from the stage,* and no longer regarded herself as a public character. But so much the

* I saw her, however, myself upon the stage twice after this meetting at Barley Wood; it was at Edinburgh; and the parts were those of Lady Macbeth and Lady Randolph. But she then performed only as an expression of kindness to her grandchildren. Professor Wilson and myself saw her on the occasion from the stage-box, with a delight embittered by the certainty that we saw her for the last time

stronger did she seem to think the claims of her friends upon anything she could do for their amusement.

Meantime, amongst the many pleasurable impressions which Mrs. Siddons's presence never failed to make, there was one which was positively painful and humiliating: it was the degradation which it inflicted upon other women. One day there was a large dinner party at Barley Wood — Mrs. Siddons was present; and I remarked to a gentleman who sat next to me — a remark which he heartily confirmed — that upon rising to let the ladies leave us, Mrs. Siddons, by the mere necessity of her regal deportment dwarfed the whole party, and made them look ridiculous; though Mrs. H. More, and others of the ladies present, were otherwise really women of very pleasing appearance.

One final remark is forced upon me by my recollections of Mrs. Jordan, and of her most unhappy end; it is this; and strange enough it seems: — That the child of laughter and comic mirth, whose laugh itself thrilled the heart with pleasure, and who created gayety of the noblest order for one entire generation of her countrymen, died prematurely, and in exile, and in affliction, which really killed her by its own stings. If ever woman died of a broken heart, of tenderness bereaved, and of hope deferred, that woman was Mrs. Jordan. On the other hand, this sad votary of Melpomene, the queen of the tragic stage, died, full of years and honors, in the bosom of her admiring country, in the centre of idolizing friends, and happy in all things except this, that some of those whom she most loved on earth had gone before her Strange contrariety of lots for the two transcendent daughters of the comic and tragic muse. For my own part, I shall always regard my recollections of Mrs.

Siddons as those in which chiefly I have an advantage over the coming generation; nay, perhaps over all generations; for many centuries may revolve without producing such another transcendent creature.

CHAPTER XXI.

WALKING STEWART. — EDWARD IRVING. — WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In London, for a space of fifteen or twenty years, the most interesting by far of all my friends, and, singly, a sufficient magnet to draw me in that direction, sometimes when I had no other motive for such a journey, was the celebrated Peripatetic, John Stewart, commonly called 'Walking Stewart.' This man was indeed, in many respects, a more interesting person than any I have known, amongst those distinguished by accomplishments of the same kind. He was by birth a Scotsman: but it was little indeed that he owed to the land of his nativity; for he had been early turned adrift, and thrown altogether upon his own resources. At school, as he often told me with high glee, and even with something of gratified vanity in the avowal, no boy except himself was considered an invincible dunce, or what is sometimes called a Bergen-op-zoom; that is, a head impregnable to all teaching and all impressions that could be conveyed through books. Erudition, in fact, and classical or philological learning of every kind, he thoroughly despised; nor could he have been won by kindness even to take an interest in studies from which his mind naturally revolted; and thus, like many a boy before him, he obtained the reputation of a dunce, merely because his

powers were never called into action or tried amongst tasks in which he took any genial delight. Yet this same scoffing-stock of the school, when summoned away to the tasks of life, dealing with subjects that interested his feelings, and moving in an element for which his natural powers had qualified him, displayed the energetic originality of genius. He went out to Bengal as a servant of the Company, in a civil capacity, and, for some time, was viewed both as an aspiring young man and as a young man of great promise: but, suddenly, some strong scruples of conscience seized him, with regard to the tenure of the Company's Indian empire, and to the mode in which it was administered. Simply upon the impulse of these scruples, doubtless ill-founded, he quitted the Company's service, and entered that of a native prince — I think the Nawaub of Arcot: him he served in the office of secretary. And, finally, quitting this service also, chiefly, I conjecture, because the instinct of migration and of rambling was strong upon him, he commenced that long course of pedestrian travelling which thenceforwards occupied the active years of his life: in fact, from perhaps the age of twenty-three to fifty-eight or sixty. A navigator who has accomplished the *periplus* (περιπλους) of the globe, we call a *circumnavigator;* and, by parity of reason, we might call a man in the circumstances of Mr. Stewart, viz. one who has walked round the *terra firma* of the globe, from Kamtschatka to Paraguay, and from Paraguay to Lapland, a *circumperipatetic*, (or, if the reader objects to this sort of tautology in the *circum* and the *peri*, a *circumnambulator.*) A terrestrial globe, representing the infinite wanderings of Mr. Stewart, would have seemed belted and zoned in all latitudes, like a Ptolemaic globe of the heavens, with cycles and epicycles, approaching, crossing, traversing

coinciding, receding. No region, pervious to human feet except, I think, China and Japan, but had been visited by Mr. Stewart in this philosophic style; a style which compels a man to move slowly through a country, and to fall in continually with the natives of that country in a degree far beyond what is possible for the traveller in carriages and palanquins,* or mounted on horses, mules, or camels.

It may be presumed of any man who has travelled so extensively, and has thrown himself so fearlessly, for five or eight and thirty years, amongst men of all nations and in all degrees of civilization, that he must often have found himself in situations of great and sudden danger. In fact, Walking Stewart, like the famous Ledyard, used to look back upon the hardships, the sufferings, and the risks he had undergone, as too romantic for rehearsal. People would imagine, as he thought, that he was using the traveller's immemorial privilege of embellishing; and accordingly, as one foremost feature in the character of John Stewart, was his noble reverence for truth, so that, to have won a universal interest with the public, he would not have deviated, by one hair's breadth, from the severe facts of a case; for that reason it was rare that he would be persuaded to relate any part of his adventures which approached the marvellous. Being so sincerely and profoundly veracious, he was jealous even of being suspected to be otherwise, though it were in a trifling question, or by a shadow of exaggeration. Yet, unwilling as he was to report his own adventurous hazards, or the escapes which, doubtless, he often owed to his own

* Dawk-travelling in a palanquin has been so much improved of late throughout India, that ninety miles a day may be accomplished in favorable weather; and, if the bearers are laid carefully, one hundred. With this velocity, and this seclusion, little can be seen.

address, courage, or presence of mind, one general remark I have often heard him make, and with great energy; a remark abstracted from all his dangers collectively, though he would not refer to them separately and individually: it is a remark which ought to be put on record for the honor of human nature; and it should be viewed in the light of a testimony given by a witness, whose opportunities for collecting a fair evidence must far have exceeded those of all other men, making no exception in favor of any nation or any century. His remark was this — that, although in barbarous countries, with no police or organized provisions whatsoever, for the protection of human life and property, many violent and licentious aggressions would, doubtless, be committed, under circumstances of temptation or of provocation, upon the weak or defenceless stranger; yet that, in the whole course of his experience, he had never known one case where the rudest savage of the wildest tribes had violated an *understood* trust reposed in his forbearance. It was generally supposed, he said, that the civilized traveller amongst savages might lay his account with meeting unprovoked violence, except in so far as he carried arms for his protection. Now, he had found it by much the safer plan to carry no arms. That he had never found, and did not believe that in travels ten times more extensive he ever should have found, a human being so base as to refuse (provided he could be made *clearly to understand*) the appeal made to his generosity by a fellow-being, in boldly throwing himself upon his justice or hospitality; and if a different creed prevailed often amongst nautical people, it was owing (he contended) to the extreme levity and thoughtlessness of sailors. Indeed, the records of voyages, and, very recently, the records of our new settlements in Australia

teem with instances where feuds, through a whole generation, (wanton and causeless as they may seem to many of those who merely *inherit* the consequences,) have been originally provoked by a cruel or cowardly salutation from fire-arms to a party of natives, advancing, perhaps, in a tumultuous manner, alarming to the timid or the inexperienced, but with intentions perfectly pacific.

Walking Stewart was, in conversation, the most eloquent man — limiting the meaning to the eloquence of nature, unsustained by any range of illustration from books — that I have ever known. Nor was I singular in this opinion; for Mr. Wordsworth, the poet, said something to the same effect, in speaking of the political harangues which he was in the habit of making about the time of the French Revolution. And little as he occupied himself with books as a reader, by a strange inversion of the ordinary human relations to literature, he — this rare and slight reader — was largely connected with books as an author. Apparently, he read little or nothing but what he wrote himself; books treating of man, his nature, his expectations, and his duties, in a desultory style; mingling much profound philosophy with many absurd or whimsical theories of physiology, or equally chimerical hypotheses of health and the modes of preserving it. Animal food or wine he never allowed himself to use; or, in fact, anything but the Brahminical diet of milk, fruit, and bread. It is saying little in favor of his system, to mention that he, in his own person, enjoyed a cloudless health; for so he would have done under any diet, with the same quantity of bodily exercise, and enjoying the same original hardness of constitution and athletic frame of body. Latterly, his sole pleasure was music; and it grieved me to find, therefore, towards the close of his life, that he was growing exceedingly

deaf: but this defect of hearing he remedied partially by purchasing an organ of considerable size and power.

Walking Stewart had purchased, in his younger days, an annuity, which, in fact, for many years, constituted his sole dependence. The tables of mortality were very imperfect at that time, and the Insurance Offices made many losing contracts; amongst which was Mr. Stewart's. He had long been viewed by the office as one of their bad bargains; and he had a playful malice in presenting himself annually to establish his continued existence. The office was always in a roar of laughter when he made his entry: for the Directors protested that he had already lived too long by twenty years for their interest; and he, on his part, ascribing his robust health to his peculiar diet, threatened them with living at least twenty years longer. He did, certainly, wear all the promise of doing so; for his eye was as brilliant and his cheek as fresh as those of men forty years younger. But he did not quite redeem the pledges of his appearance. A few years before his death, he gained an important suit against the East India Company. How that should have hastened his death, I cannot conjecture; for so thoroughly had his simple diet become necessary to his comfort, and a matter of cordial preference, that no entreaties of a friend would persuade him to take a glass of wine or spirits. A man more temperate never existed, nor a man in all respects of more philosophic habits, or more entire independence. I and others, who would not have insulted him with the offer of money, yet, knowing at one time the extreme slenderness of his resources, attempted to send him books and a few other luxuries, by way of relieving the weariness (as we feared) of his long solitary evenings in the heart of tumultuous London. But, though taking our attentions kindly, he uniformly repelled

them; nor ever, in one instance, would accept of anything that might bring his perfect independence into question. He died when I was absent from London; and I could never learn the circumstances: for he had, I believe, no relatives; and his opulence, during the latter years of his life, would be likely to throw him into the hands of strangers. His books are filled with extravagances on all subjects; and, to religious people, they are especially revolting, by the uniform spirit of contempt which he manifests for all creeds alike — Christian, Mahometan, Buddhist, Pagan. In fact, he was as deliberate and resolute an Atheist as can ever have existed: but, for all that, and although wishing, for his own sake, that he had been a more religious man, or at least had felt a greater reverence for such subjects, and a closer sympathy with that which, for so vast a majority of the human race, must ever constitute their sole consolation under sorrow and calamity; still I could not close my eyes to the many evidences which his writings and his conversation afforded of a true grandeur of mind, and of a calm Spinosistic state of contemplative reverie. In fact, he was half crazy. But his mind, like a shell taken from the sea, still echoed and murmured to the multitudinous sounds and forms amongst which his former years had been passed. The many nations amongst whom he had walked, 'passing like night' (as the Ancient Mariner describes himself) 'from land to land,' — the black men, and the white men, and the 'dusk-faces with white silken turbands wreathed,' — were present for ever, and haunted his inner eye with imagery of the noblest kind, and with moving pageantries, in the midst of silence and years of deafness. He was himself a fine specimen of the animal Man. And, in some directions, he was fine also intellectually. His

books, which are past counting, ought to be searched, and a bead-roll of fine thoughts, or eloquent expressions of old ones, separated from the eccentric speculations with which they too often lie interwoven. These books contain, moreover, some very wise practical suggestions, particularly as to the mode of warfare adapted to the British nation. And for knowledge of national character he was absolutely unrivalled. Some time or other, I may myself draw up a memoir of his life, and raise a tribute to his memory by a series of extracts such as I have suggested.

Another eminent man of our times, whom I came to know in my later visits to London, was the Rev. Edward Irving; and, in some respects, he is naturally recalled by the remembrance of Walking Stewart; for, like him, he had a fervid nature, a most energetic will, and aspirations after something greater than he could find in life. Like him, also, he owed not very much to education or study. Mr. Irving, unfortunately for his own reputation, sinned so enormously against prudence, and indeed against all sanity of mind during the latter part of his career — his writings and his actions were so equally indicative of an unsettled intellect — that, with most people, this sad revolution in his nature has availed to extinguish the recollection of that unequalled splendor of appearance with which he convulsed all London at his first *debût*. He was, unquestionably, by many, many degrees, the greatest orator of our times. Of him, indeed, more than of any man whom I have seen throughout my whole experience, it might be said, with truth and with emphasis, that he was a Boanerges, a son of thunder; and, in a sense, even awful and unhappy for himself, it might be affirmed that he had a demon within himself. Doubt there can now be none that he was insane, or partially so,

from the very first. Not many weeks after his first burst upon the metropolis, I had the pleasure of meeting him at a dinner party. He was in exuberant spirits; and he strode about the drawing-room, before dinner, with the air of one who looked upon himself as clothed with the functions of Jonah sent to Nineveh, or of Paul upon a celestial mission to the Gentiles. He talked a good deal of phrenology, and in the tone of one who had entirely adopted its great leading doctrines. My head, with a very slight apology for doing so, he examined: his report, being somewhat flattering, I shall not repeat, further than that 'conscientiousness' was found in great strength, and 'veneration,' which were the chief *moral* indications that he detected. We walked homewards together; and, as it happened that our roads coincided for three miles or more, we had a good deal of conversation. In one thing he thoroughly agreed with me, viz. in disliking common literary society, by comparison with that of people less pretending, left more to the impulses of their natural unchecked feelings, and entertaining opinions less modelled upon what they read. One ebullition of his own native disposition was, however, not very amiable. Near Charing Cross, a poor houseless female vagrant came up to us and asked charity. Now, it was in no respect surprising to me, that Mr. Irving should refuse to give her anything, knowing that so many excellent people systematically set their faces against street alms; and a man, the most kind-hearted in the world, whose resources are limited, may very reasonably prefer throwing whatever he has at his disposal into the channels of well organized charitable institutions. Not, therefore, the refusal, but the manner of the refusal, it was which surprised me. Mr. Irving shook off the poor shivering suppliant, whose manner was timid and dejected, with a roughness that

would have better become a parish beadle towards a stout masterful beggar, counterfeiting the popular character of a shipwrecked mariner. Yet I am far from thinking, or wishing to insinuate, that Edward Irving was deficient in benignity. It was the overmastering demoniac fervor of his nature, the constitutional riot in his blood, more than any harshness of disposition, which prompted his fierce refusal.

It is remarkable, and I mention it as no proof of any sagacity of myself, but, on the contrary, as a proof of broad and palpable indications, open and legible to him who ran, that from what I saw of Mr. Edward Irving, at this first interview, I drew an augury, and immediately expressed it to more than one friend; that he was destined to a melancholy close of his career, in lunacy. I drew my judgment from the expression and the peculiar restlessness of his eye, combined with the untamable fervor of his manner, and his evident craving after intense states of excitement. I believe that public applause, or at least public sympathy with his own agitated condition of feeling, and public attention, at any rate to himself, as a great moral power thundering and lightening through the upper regions of the London atmosphere, really became indispensable to his comfort. The effect of his eloquence, great as that certainly was, had been considerably exaggerated to the general estimate, by the obstacles opposed to the popular curiosity, in the mere necessities of the narrow chapel within which he preached. Stories of carriage panels beaten in, chapel windows beaten out, as entrances for ladies of rank and distinguished senators — such stories to awaken the public interest, and then (as consequences of that interest, which re-acted to sustain and widen it) stories of royal princesses, lord chancellors, and prime ministers, going, in spite of all difficulties, to hear

the new apostle of the North — these things procured for Mr. Irving, during the early novitiate of his London career, if not great audiences, (which, numerically speaking, his chapel would not have admitted,) yet so memorable a conflict of competition for the small space available to those who had no private right of admission, that inevitably the result was misunderstood, or, at least, misappreciated by the public. The smaller was the disposable accommodation, so much the hotter was the contest: and thus a small chapel, and a small congregation told more effectually in his favor, more emphatically proclaimed his sudden popularity, than the largest could have done. Meantime, the presbytery, availing themselves of the sudden enthusiasm called into life by this splendid meteor, collected large subscriptions for a new chapel. This being built upon a scale proportioned to the money, offered ample accommodation to the public curiosity. That feeling could not wholly have subsided; but many, like Wilberforce, had found themselves sufficiently gratified by a single experience of Mr. Irving's powers; others, upon principle, were unwilling to leave their old pastors — not to mention that, for the majority, this would have involved a secession from the particular creed to which they adhered; and, when deductions were made from Mr. Irving's audiences, upon these and other accounts, those who still went as extra auditors were no longer numerous enough, now that they were diffused through a large chapel, to create the former tumultuous contests for admission.

The enthusiasm of the public had now subsided and settled into a condition more uniform, and no longer capable of holding up a mirror which reflected Mr. Irving's own intense state of exaltation. It was the state of collapse which succeeded in his mind, the want of

correspondence which he found between the public zeal to be taught or moved, and his own to teach or move: this it was, I can hardly doubt, which drove him into those crazy speculations which eventually cost him the general respect, and led to an open breach between himself and the trustees for the management of the property embarked upon the chapel. Unable to win the popular astonishment by the legitimate display of his extraordinary powers, he attempted to secure the same end by extravagance. The whole extent of this extravagance, it is true, he did not perceive; for his mind was unhinged. But still the insanity, which had preyed upon him from the very first, lay more in his moral nature, and in a disease of his will, than in the functions of his intellect. Disappointment, vexation of heart, wounded pride, and latterly, perhaps, some tinge of remorse for the abuse which he had made of his magnificent endowments, all combined, with the constitutional fever in his blood, to sap his health and spirits. That he was very unhappy, latterly, I have no doubt; nor was I, for my part, ever called upon to feel so powerfully the conviction that here was a ruined man of genius, and a power in the first rank of great moral agencies, an orator the most Demosthenic of our age, descending rapidly to night and utter extinction, as during the whole latter years of Edward Irving's troubled existence. I am not singular in my estimate of him as an orator: — Mr. Canning, a most accomplished orator himself, and, as a great *artist*, the first orator of our times, but perhaps, for that very reason, less likely to do full justice in a case of power that was altogether natural, and no way indebted to art, even he (when visiting Mr. Bolton of Storrs, on Windermere) said something very nearly approaching to what I have here said. I did not hear it myself; but I afterwards heard it from many who did

He was the only man of our times who realized one's idea of Paul preaching at Athens, or defending himself before King Agrippa. Terrific meteor! unhappy son of fervid genius, which mastered thyself even more than the rapt audiences which at one time hung upon thy lips! were the cup of life once again presented to thy lips, wouldst thou drink again; or would thou not rather turn away from it with shuddering abomination? Sleep, Boanerges! and let the memory of man settle only upon thy colossal powers, without a thought of those intellectual aberrations which were more powerful for thy own ruin than for the misleading of others!

London, however, great as were its attractions, did but rarely draw me away from Westmoreland. There I found more and more a shelter and an anchor for my own wishes. Originally, as I have mentioned, the motive which drew me to this county, in combination with its own exceeding beauty, had been the society of Wordsworth. But in this I committed a great oversight. Men of extraordinary genius and force of mind are far better as objects for distant admiration than as daily companions; — not that I would insinuate anything to the disadvantage of Mr. Wordsworth. What I have to say in the way of complaint, shall be said openly and frankly; this is but fair; for insinuations or covert accusations always leave room for misconstruction and for large exaggeration. Mr. Wordsworth is not only a man of principle and integrity, according to the severest standard of such a character, but he is even a man, in many respects, of amiable manners. Still there are traits of character about him, and modes of expressing them in his manners, which make a familiar or neighborly intercourse with him painful and mortifying. Pride, in its most exalted form,

he was entitled to feel; but something there was, in the occasional expression of this pride, which was difficult to bear. Upon ground where he was really strong, Wordsworth was not arrogant. In a question of criticism, he was open to any man's suggestions. But there *were* fields of thought or of observation which he seemed to think locked up and sacred to himself; and any alien entrance upon those fields he treated almost as intrusions and usurpations. One of these, and which naturally occurred the most frequently, was the whole theory of picturesque beauty, as presented to our notice at every minute by the bold mountainous scenery amongst which we lived, and as it happened to be modified by the seasons of the year, by the time of day, or by the accidents of light and shade. Now Wordsworth and his sister really had, as I have before acknowledged, a peculiar depth of organic sensibility to the effects of form and color; and to *them* I was willing to concede a vote, such as in ancient Rome was called 'a prerogative vote,' upon such questions. But, not content with this, Wordsworth virtually claimed the same precedency for all who were connected with himself, though merely by affinity, and therefore standing under no colorable presumption (as blood relations might have done) of inheriting the same constitutional gifts of organization. To everybody, standing out of this sacred and privileged pale, Wordsworth behaved with absolute insult in cases of this nature; he did not even appear to listen; but, as if what they said on such a theme must be childish prattle, turned away with an air of perfect indifference; began talking, perhaps, with another person on another subject; or, at all events, never noticed what we said, by an apology for an answer. I, very early in our connection, having observed this inhuman arrogance, took care never afterwards to lay myself under

the possibility of such an insult. Systematically I avoided saying anything, however suddenly tempted into any expression of my feelings, upon the natural appearances, whether in the sky or on the earth. Thus I evaded one cause of quarrel; and so far Wordsworth was not aware of the irritation and disgust which he had founded in the minds of his friends. But there were other manifestations of the same ungenial and exclusive pride, even still more offensive and of wider application.

With other men, upon finding or thinking one's self ill-used, all one had to do was to make an explanation; and, with any reasonable grounds of complaint, or any reasonable temper to manage, one was tolerably sure of redress. Not so with Wordsworth; he had learned from Mrs. C—— a vulgar phrase for all attempts at reciprocal explanations — he called them contemptuously '*fending and proving*.' And you might lay your account with being met *in limine*, and further progress barred, by a declaration to this effect — 'Mr. X Y Z, I will have nothing to do with fending and proving.' This amounted, in other words, to saying, that he conceived himself to be liberated from those obligations of justice and courtesy by which other men are bound. Now, I knew myself well enough to be assured that, under such treatment, I should feel too much indignation and disgust to persevere in courting the acquaintance of a man who thus avowed his contempt for the laws of equal dealing. Redress I knew that I should never get; and, accordingly, I reasoned thus: — 'I have been ill-used to a certain extent; but do I think *that* a sufficient reason for giving up all my intimacy with a man like Wordsworth? If I do *not*, let me make no complaint; for, inevitably, if I *do* make complaint, that will be the result. For, though I am able to bear the particular wrong I now complain of, yet I feel that even from Words-

worth I could not tolerate an open and contemptuous refusal of justice. The result, then, if I pursue this matter, will be to rob me of Wordsworth's acquaintance. Reparation, already necessary to my feelings, will then become necessary to my honor: I shall fail to obtain it; and then it will become my *duty* to renounce his acquaintance. I will, therefore, rest contentedly where I am.'

What then were the cases of injustice which I had to complain of? Such they were as between two men could hardly have arisen; but wherever there are women — unless the terms on which the parties stand are most free and familiar, so that fast as clouds arise of misunderstanding, explanations may have full leave to move concurrently, and nothing be left for either side to muse upon as wrong, or meditated insult — I hold it next to impossible that occasions should not arise in which both parties will suspect some undervaluing, or some failure in kindness or respect. I, to give one example, had, for the controller of my domestic *manége*, a foolish, selfish, and ignorant old maid. Naturally, she ought to have been no enemy to the Wordsworths, for she had once lived as a servant with them; and, for my service, she had been engaged, at high wages, by Miss Wordsworth herself. These motives to a special regard for the W.'s, were not weighty enough to overrule her selfishness. Having unlimited power in all which regarded the pecuniary arrangements of my house, she became a person of some consideration and some power amongst her little sphere. In my absence, she took upon herself the absolute command of everything; and I could easily perceive, by different anecdotes which reached me, that she was jealous of any abridgment to her own supreme discretion, such as might naturally arise through any exercise of those friendly rights, claimed in my absence, by those friends who conceived themselves to have

the freedom of my house, and the right to use its accommodations in any honorable way prompted by their own convenience. To my selfish housekeeper this was a dangerous privilege; for, if it had brought no other evil with it, inevitably it would sometimes lay a restraint upon her gadding propensity, and detain her at home during months when otherwise my great distance gave her the amplest privilege of absence. In shaping remedies for this evil, which, from natural cowardice, she found it difficult to oppose in her own person, she had a ready resource in charging upon myself the measures which she found convenient. '*Master* [which was her technical designation for myself] thinks thus,' or 'Master left such and such directions.' These were obvious fictions, for a woman so selfish and mean. Any real friend of mine ought to have read, in the very situation which this woman held — in her obvious interest, connected with her temper — a sufficient commentary upon the real state of things. A man more careless than myself of the petty interests concerned in such a case could not exist. And it may be supposed with what disgust and what reasonable indignation I heard of opinions uttered upon my character by those who called themselves my friends; opinions shaped to meet, not any conduct which I had ever held, or which it could be pretended that I had countenanced, but to meet the false imputations of an interested woman, who was by those imputations doing to me a far deeper injury than to those whom she merely shut out from a momentary accommodation.

But why not, upon discovering such forgeries and misrepresentations, openly and loudly denounce them for what they were? I answer, that when a man is too injuriously wounded by the words of his *soi-disant* friends, oftentimes a strong movement of pride makes it painful for him to

degrade himself by explanations or justifications. Besides that, when once a false idea has prepossessed the minds of your friends, justification oftentimes becomes impossible. My servant, in such a case, would have worn the air of one who had offended me, not by a base falsehood, but by an imprudence in betraying too much of the truth; and, doubtless, when my back was turned, she would insinuate that her own interest had obliged her to put up with my disavowal of what she had done; but that, in literal truth, she had even fallen short of my directions. Others, again, would think that, though no specific directions might have been given to her, possibly she had collected my sincere wishes from words of complaint dropped casually upon former occasions. Thus, in short, partly I disdained, partly I found it impossible, to exonerate myself from those most false imputations; and I sate down half-contentedly under accusations which, in every solemnity of truth, applied less justly to myself than to any one person I knew amongst the whole circle of my acquaintance. The result was, that ever after I hated the name of the woman at whose hands I had sustained this wrong, so far as such a woman could be thought worthy of hatred; and that I began to despise a little some of those who had been silly and undiscerning enough to accredit such representations; and one of them especially, who, though liberally endowed with sunshiny temper and sweetness of disposition, was perhaps a person weak, intellectually, beyond the ordinary standards of female weakness.

Hence began the waning of my friendship with the Wordsworths. But, in reality, never after the first year or so from my first introduction, had I felt much possibility of drawing the bonds of friendship tight with a man of Wordsworth's nature. He seemed to me too much like his own Pedlar in the 'Excursion;' a man so diffused

amongst innumerable objects of equal attraction, that he had no cells left in his heart for strong individual attachments. I was not singular in this feeling. Professor Wilson had become estranged from him: Coleridge, one of his earliest friends, had become estranged: no one person could be deemed fervently his friend. And, with respect to Coleridge, he certainly had strong reasons to be estranged; and equally certain it is that he held a profound sense of those reasons for some years. He told me himself, and this was his peculiar inference from the case, and what he made its moral, that married people rarely retain much capacity of friendship. Their thoughts, and cares, and anxieties, are all so much engrossed by those who naturally and rightly sit nearest to their hearts, that other friends, chosen, perhaps, originally for intellectual qualities chiefly, and seen only at casual intervals, must, by mere human necessity, come to droop and fade in their remembrance. I see no absolute necessity for this; nor have I felt it since my own experience of the situation supposed by Coleridge has enabled me to judge. But, at all events, poor Coleridge had found it true in his own case. The rupture between him and Wordsworth, which rather healed itself by lapse of time and the burning dim of fierce recollections, than by any formal reconciliation or pardon exchanged between the parties, arose thus: — An old acquaintance of Coleridge's happening to visit the Lakes, proposed to carry Coleridge with him to London on his return. This gentleman's wife, a lady of some distinction as to person and intellectual accomplishments, had an equal pleasure in Coleridge's society. They had a place disposable in their travelling carriage; and thus all things tallied towards the general purpose. Meantime, Wordsworth, irritated with what he viewed as excessive vanity in this gentleman, (for his plan of taking Coleridge

to London and making him an inmate in his house, had originated in a higher purpose of weaning Coleridge from opium,) ridiculed the whole scheme pointedly, as a visionary and Quixotic enterprise, such as no man of worldly experience could ever seriously countenance. The dispute — for it took that shape — tempted or drove Wordsworth into supporting his own views of Coleridge's absolute incorrigibility, by all the anecdotes he could gather together illustrative of the utter and irredeemable slavery which had mastered the poor opium-martyr's will. And, most assuredly, he drew such a picture of Coleridge, and of his sensual effeminacy, as ought not to have proceeded from the hands of a friend. Notwithstanding all this, the purpose held amongst the three contracting parties: they went southwards; and, for a time, the plan was still farther realized, of making Coleridge, not merely a travelling companion, but also an inmate of their house. This plan, however, fell through, in consequence of incompatible habits. And, in the feud which followed, this gentleman and his wife upbraided Coleridge with the opinions held of him by his own oldest and most valued friend, William Wordsworth; and, perhaps as much to defend themselves as to annoy Coleridge, they repeated many of the arguments used by Wordsworth, and of the anecdotes by which he supported them; anecdotes which, unfortunately, vouched for their own authenticity, and were self-attested, since none but Wordsworth could have known them.

I have mentioned the kind of wrongs which first caused my personal feelings to grow colder towards the Wordsworths; and there were, afterwards, others added to these, of a nature still more irritating, because they related to more delicate topics. And, again and again, I was provoked to wonder that persons, of whom some commanded respect and attention simply as the near connections of a

great man, should so far forget the tenure on which their influence rested, as to arrogate a tone of authority upon their own merits. Meantime, however much my personal feelings had altered gradually towards Wordsworth; and more, I think, in connection with his pride than through any or all other causes acting jointly, (insomuch that I used to say, Never describe Wordsworth as equal in pride to Lucifer; no, but if you have occasion to write a life of Lucifer, set down that, by possibility, in respect to pride, he might be some type of Wordsworth;) still, I say, my intellectual homage to Wordsworth had not been shaken. Even this, however, in a course of years, had gradually been modified. It is impossible to imagine the perplexity of mind which possessed me when I heard Wordsworth ridicule many books which I had been accustomed to admire profoundly. For some years, so equally ineradicable was either influence — my recollection, on the one hand, of the books despised, and of their power over my feelings; on the other, my blind and unquestioning veneration for Wordsworth — that I was placed in a strange sort of contradictory life; feeling that things were and were not at the same instant; believing and not believing in the same breath. And not until I had read much in German critics, of what they were the first to notice, viz. the accident of *einseitigkeit*, or *one-sidedness*, as a peculiarity not unfrequently besetting the strongest minds, did I slowly come to the discovery that Wordsworth, beyond all men, perhaps, that have ever lived, (and very likely as one condition towards the possibility of his own exceeding originality,) was *einseitig* in extremity. This one-sidedness shows itself most conspicuously in his dislikings; but occasionally even in his likings. Cotton, for instance, whom, in one of his critical disquisitions, he praises so extravagantly for his fancy, has never found an admirer

except in himself. And this mistake to be made in a field of such enormous opulence as is that of fancy!

But, omitting many flagrant instances, the one which most appalled myself was the following: — The 'Canterbury Tales' of the Miss Lees are sufficiently well known, but not sufficiently appreciated; and one reason may be, that the very inferior tales of Miss Sophia Lee are mingled with those of Miss Harriet. Two of those written by Harriet, viz. *The Landlady's Tale* and *The German's*, are absolutely unrivalled as specimens of fine narration. With respect to the latter, it is well known that Lord Byron travestied this inimitable tale into a most miserable drama; interweaving with the dialogue of his piece every word in the original conversations, unaltered nearly, and assuredly not bettered. And the very act of borrowing a plot from a tale in which so very much depends upon the plot, and where it is of a kind that will not bend to alterations, or modifications of any kind; this in itself bespoke a poor ambition, and the servile spirit * of a plagiarist. This most splendid tale I put into the hands of Wordsworth; and for once, having, I suppose, nothing else to read, he condescended to run through it. I shall not report his opinion, which, in fact, was no opinion; for the whole colossal exhibition of fiendish grandeur in Conrad; the fine delineation of mixed power and weakness in Siegendorf; and the exquisite relief given to the whole by the truly Shakspearian portrait of feminine innocence and nobility in Josephine; he had failed so much as to guess at. All that he wondered at was the Machiavelian insight into motives, and the play of human char-

* It is quite unknown to the world that Lord Byron's poem of 'Lara' had already contained a gross plagiarism from Miss H. Lee. The whole outline of the story, and many remarkable phrases, are borrowed from *The German's Tale.*

acter; with respect to which he said, coldly enough, that t left an uncomfortable impression of a woman as being too clever. Schiller's 'Wallenstein,' again, was equally unpleasing to him and unintelligible. Most people have been enraptured with the beautiful group of Max. Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla; both because they furnish a sweet relief to the general harsh impression from so many worldly-minded, scheming, treacherous, malignant ruffians, meeting together, in one camp, as friends, or rivals, or betrayers; and also on their own separate account, even apart from the relation which they bear to the whole; for both are noble, both innocent, both young, and both unfortunate: a combination of advantages towards winning our pity which has rarely been excelled. Yet Wordsworth's sole remark to me, upon Wallenstein, was this; that he could not comprehend Schiller's meaning or object in entailing so much unhappiness upon these young people; a remark that, to me, was incomprehensible; for why, then, did Shakspeare make Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, unhappy? Or why, to put the question more generally, did any man ever write a tragedy?

Perhaps, to the public, it may illustrate Wordsworth's one-sidedness more strikingly, if I should mention my firm persuasion that he has never read one page of Sir Walter Scott's novels. Of this I am satisfied; though it is true that, latterly, feeling more indulgently to the public favorites as the public has come to appreciate himself more justly, he has spoken of these tales in a tone of assumed enthusiasm.* One of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, viz. 'The Italian,' he had, by some strange accident, read; read, but only to laugh at it; whilst, on the other hand, the novels of Smollett, Fielding, and Le Sage —

* 'Yarrow Revisited.'

so disgusting by their moral scenery and the whole state of vicious society in which they keep the reader moving: these, and merely for the ability of the execution, he read and remembered with extreme delight.

Without going over any other examples, it may well be understood that, by these striking instances of defective sympathy in Wordsworth with the universal feelings of his age, my intellectual, as well as my personal regard for him, would be likely to suffer. In fact, I learned, gradually, that he was not only liable to human error, but that, in some points, and those of large extent, he was frailer and more infirm than most of his fellow-men. I viewed this defect, it is very true, as being the condition and the price, as it were, or ransom of his own extraordinary power and originality; but still it raised a curtain which had hitherto sustained my idolatry. I viewed him now as a *mixed* creature, made up of special infirmity and special strength. And, finally, I now viewed him as no longer capable of an equal friendship.

With this revolution in my feelings, why did I not now leave Westmoreland? I will say: Other attractions had arisen; different in kind; equally potent in degree. These stepped in to enchain me, precisely as my previous chains were unlinking themselves, and leaving me in freedom.

In these sketches (written with so much hurry as, in no one instance that I remember, to have allowed me time for once reading over a single paragraph of what I had written), I have usually thought it best, in the few cases where I had afterwards an opportunity of correcting the press errors, simply to restore the word which it was probable or apparent that I had originally written; or which, at least, I must have meant to write. Changes

more extensive than this it could not be advisable to make, in a case where I had no opening for a thorough recast of the whole. Even in those instances where a thought, or an expression, or a statement of facts, might be calculated to do me some little injury, unless it were expanded, or accompanied with an explanation, or more cautiously restricted, I thought it better on the whole, to abide the hazard; placing my reliance for the redress of any harsh judgment on the absolute certainty, that each successive month washes out of the public mind every trace of what may have occupied it in any previous month. But, in this sketch of *Walking Stewart*, there is something which demands a more instant explanation; for it happens that, at this moment of revising the press errors, an anecdote occurs to me, which illustrates the danger, in such a case, of a permanent misconstruction. Many years ago, I was spending a few days at the country-house of a foreign merchant. His wife, a very intelligent, and even intellectual person, came to me one morning with a book in her hand, of which several leaves had been torn into fragments. Her features, generally placid and amiable, wore an expression of matronly scorn. She blushed, but it was more with indignation than with feminine shame, as she put the book into my hands. It was mine, she said, my property; and therefore she had not tossed it into the fire. One of her infant children had found it, and had dealt with it as I saw: 'and, if the child had destroyed the whole of it, she could not think that I was much entitled to complain.' It was one of my Peripatetic friend's essays, under some such title as *The Apocalypse of Nature*, or, *The Revelation of Reason*.

This accident, directing my eye to the part of the volume which had been injured, reminded me of a fact which otherwise I had naturally enough forgotten, viz. that

Walking Stewart had occasionally touched on subjects quite unfitted for a public treatment; or, at least, as questions for philosophic speculation, calling for the disguise of a learned language. I made my peace with the lady by assuring her, first, that (this particular volume being one of many by the same author) I had not been aware of the gross passages which appeared to disfigure it near the end; and, secondly, (which part of my apology it is that I now direct to my readers,) that my personal knowledge of the man modified to my mind the doctrines of the author. Things said broadly and coarsely, which could not but shock strangers, to *my* interpretation, were blunted and defeated in their effect by the private knowledge I had of the writer's ultimate object, and of the inartificial mode in which he dealt with his native language. Language was too complex a machine for his management. He had never been an accurate scholar; and his idiom had entangled itself with the many exotic idioms which at times he had used familiarly for years.

Under the spirit of this general apology, I beg to shelter whatever I may have asserted of Mr. Stewart as a philosophic speculator. He was a man religious by temperament and the tendency of all his feelings; yet it is true that his mere understanding, yielding itself up to speculations which he could not manage, has prompted the most scornful expressions towards all doctrinal religions alike. He was pure and temperate in his habits of life beyond the common standard of men; yet his page was sometimes stained with sentiments too gross and animal. Ignorant of philosophy in its forms and terminology, he was, by capacity of profound reverie, a true philosopher — in the sense that he felt his way to truths greater and deeper than he could always explain; and, finally, though his books are filled with strong (oftentimes

harsh) truths, he was, as a man, the most comprehensively benign, the most largely in sympathy with human nature, of any whom I have yet known. He passed his latter years in utter deafness; [in noticing which, let me observe that the image of the shell which I have used, though not consciously, at the moment of writing, taken from Wordsworth's 'Excursion,' or from Mr. Savage Landor's 'Gebir,' must have been derived from one or other of those poems:] he was deaf, as respected any music that could come to *him* from the world: and he was also dumb, as respected any music that could reach the world from *him*: so profound was his inability to explain himself, except at times, in conversation. Actually, therefore, he will be lost and forgotten. Potentially, he was a great man.

CHAPTER XXII.

TALFOURD. — THE LONDON MAGAZINE. — JUNIUS. — CLARE. — ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

WHILST I am upon the ground of London, that 'nation of London,' (as I have elsewhere called it,) which I have so often visited, and yet for periods so brief, that my entire London life, if transposed from its dislocated periods into one continuous aggregate, would not make above one and a half year in the whole result, it may be as well to notice some other circumstances, partly of a literary, partly of a general interest, and which might be worthy of notice in any man's life, but were so especially in the life of one who held some peculiar principles — compromises, in a measure between the extreme principles commonly avowed — which I shall explain in connection with the occasion. First, then, confining myself to my London literary experience: it was not, certainly, extensive. nor was I in spirits or in circumstances to wish it such. I lived in the most austere retirement; and the few persons whom I saw occasionally, or whose hospitalities I received, were *gens de plume*, and professedly of my own order as practising literati, but of the highest pretensions. Lamb I have already mentioned. Sergeant Talfourd I became acquainted with in the beautiful hall of the Middle Temple, whence (after dining together in the agreeable style inherited from elder days, and so pleasantly recalling

the noble refectories of Oxford amidst the fervent tumults of London) we sometimes adjourned to our coffee at the chambers of the future author of *Ion*, and enjoyed the luxury of conversation with the *élite* of the young Templars, upon the most stirring themes of life or literature. Him, indeed, I had known when a Temple student. But, in 1821, when I went up to London avowedly for the purpose of exercising my pen, as the one sole source then open to me for extricating myself from a special embarrassment, (failing which case of dire necessity, I believe that I should never have written a line for the press ;) Mr. Talfourd having become a practising barrister, I felt that I had no right to trespass upon his time, without some stronger warrant than any I could plead in my own person. I had, therefore, requested a letter of introduction to him from Wordsworth. That was a spell which, with this young lawyer, I knew to be all-potent ; and, accordingly I now received from him a great deal of kindness, which came specially commended to a man in dejected spirits, by the radiant courtesy and the cheerfulness of his manners : for, of all the men whom I have known, after long intercourse with the business of the world, the Sergeant is the one who most preserves, to all outward appearance, the freshness and integrity of his youthful spirits.

From him, also, I obtained an introduction to Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, who had very recently, upon the melancholy death of Mr. Scott, in consequence of his duel with Mr. Christie, purchased *The London Magazine*, and were themselves joint editors of that journal. The terms they held out to contributors were ultra-munificent — more so, than had yet been heard of in any quarter whatsoever ; and, upon that understanding — seeing that money was just then of necessity, the one sole object to

which I looked in the cultivation of literature — naturally enough it happened that to *them* I offered my earliest paper, viz. 'The Confessions of an English Opium Eater.' Of the two publishers, who were both hospitable and friendly men, with cultivated minds, one, viz. Mr. Taylor, was himself an author, and, upon one subject, a most successful one He had written, indeed, at that time, and since then, I understand, has written again upon different parts of political economy. But to all who are acquainted with the great reformation of this science, effected by David Ricardo, it will appear as a matter of course, upon looking into Mr. Taylor's works, that he should be found to have merely trifled. In reality, the stern application of one single doctrine — that, namely, which expounds the laws of value — would be sufficient, as I believe, of itself, to demonstrate the reputation of Mr. Taylor's, as of so many other erroneous views, in this severe but much-bewildering science. In Mr. Taylor's case, from what I saw of his opinions in 1821, I have reason to think that Locke had been the chief instrument in leading him astray. Mr. Taylor professed himself a religious dissenter; and, in all the political bearings of dissent, he travelled so far, that if, in any one instance, he manifested an illiberal spirit, it was in the temper which he held habitually towards the Church of England. Then first, indeed, it was — and amongst the company which I sometimes saw at Mr. Taylor's — that I became aware of the deadly hatred — savage, determined hatred, made up for mischief — which governed a large part of the well-educated dissenters in their feelings towards the Church of England. Being myself, not by birth and breeding only, but upon the deliberate adoption of my judgment, an affectionate son of that church, in respect to her doctrines, her rites, her discipline, and her internal government,

was both shocked and grieved to meet with what seemed to me so much levity of rash judgment amongst the thoughtful and well-principled — so harsh an illiberality amongst the liberal, so little consideration amongst the considerate. One thing was clear to me; that, in general, this angry spirit of hostility was grounded upon a false, because a superannuated, set of facts. Never, in any great public corporation, had there been, as I well knew, so large a reformation as in the Church of England, during the last forty years. The collateral Church of Methodists, hardly a Dissenting Church, raised up by John Wesley, had, after one generation or so, begun to react upon the Metropolitan Church, out of whose bosom it had been projected. The two universities of England had constantly fed from within this growing galvanism applied from without: Mr. Simeon, Professor Farish, Dean Milner, in Cambridge; Mr. Faber, the little society of Edmund Hall, &c., in Oxford; Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Babington, Mr. Thornton, in the Senate; Mrs. Hannah More in literature; severally offered a nucleus, around which, I have understood, the open profession of a deeper, more fervid, and apostolical spirit in religious opinions and religious practices, had been emboldened to gather; and the result has been that, whilst the English Church, from Queen Anne's day to the French Revolution, was at the lowest point of its depression, and absolutely cankered to the heart by the spirit of worldliness, that same church in our days, when standing on the brink, apparently, of great trials, and summoned to put forth peculiar vigilance of watch and ward, if not even to face great and trying storms, has, by great examples, by extensive religious associations, and by a powerful press, concurring with the unusual thoughtfulness generated by the French Revolution and the vast changes in its train, most seasonably

been brought gradually into a frame and composition which all who have looked with interest upon the case, deem much nearer than at any other stage of its history to the condition of a primitive and truly pastoral church.

With these views I was as much astonished as I was grieved to find the Established Church an object, at this particular crisis, of enmity so profound. Thus, however, it was. Mr. Taylor, I apprehend, shared in all the dominant feelings of the dissenters, such as I heard them frequently expressed in his society; and naturally, therefore, he entertained, amongst other literary opinions, a peculiar and perhaps blind veneration for Locke. Locke, in fact, is made an idol amongst the 'Rational' Dissenters: those whose religion begins and terminates in the understanding. This idolatry is paid to him in a double character, as the most eminent patron of religious liberty, and as the propounder of views in Christianity pretty much akin to their own want of depth and in 'anti-mysticism,' as a friend might call it; but, speaking sincerely in hostility to all that is unfathomable by the mere discursive understanding. I am not here going to entertain so large a theme as the philosophy of Locke. In another place I shall, perhaps, astonish the reader by one or two of the yet undetected blunders he has committed in his philosophy. But, confining myself to his political economy, I may take occasion to notice one error, with regard to that part of his pretensions, which has misled many. By mere accident, Locke was right, in his dispute with Lowndes of the Treasury, upon a question which arose in connection with the great recoinage of King William's days. At the request of Lord Somers, Locke undertook the discussion; and, as he happened to be right in opposition to a man whose official duty it was to have understood the subject thoroughly upon which he

speculated so wildly, this advantage, settling, in *his* case, upon a novice matched against a doctor, procured for Locke an enthusiasm of admiration which the case did not really warrant; and it was afterwards imagined, by those who looked back casually into Locke's treatises, that he was a sound economist. But the fact is, political economy had, in those days, no sort of existence: no one doctrine, not so much as that which unfolds the benefits from the division of labor was then known: the notion, again, that a nation did or could benefit by commerce, otherwise than by the accident of selling more than she bought, and, as a consequence, by accumulating the balance in the form of the precious metals — this notion was inconceivable to the human understanding at the era of Locke: no progress had been made in dissipating that delusion; and Locke was as much enslaved by it as any other man. Possibly — and there is some room to think it — he was a little in advance of the Ciceronian idea, that the very possibility of a gain, in any transaction of sale between two parties, was logically conceivable only upon the assumption of a deception on one side: that, unless they would 'lie pretty considerably,' *nisi admodum mentiantur*,) merchants must resign all hope of profit. The grounds of value, again, were as little known to Locke as the consequences of those grounds; and, in short, he had not made one step ahead of his age in any one branch of political economy. But, in his dispute with Lowndes, the victory was gained, not over scientific blunders by scientific lights; no, but over mere logical blunders, the very grossest, by common sense the most palpable. It was no victory of a special science, but one of general logic. There were no positive truths elicited, but simply a refutation, scarcely in that age needed, of some self-contradictory errors. Lowndes had so far con-

fused himself as to suppose that the same ounce of silver might, at the same time and place, be worth more or less than itself, when thrown into the shape of coin. The most obvious truths Locke himself appears to have overlooked, notwithstanding the English silver currency at that moment illustrated some of them. Locke, therefore, exposed a set of errors which could not have arisen in anything short of Irish confusion of ideas; and the truths of an affirmative order belonging to the subject, which, even under the feeble light of those times, might have been detected, escaped him altogether. So much I have thought it right to say on Mr. Taylor's Political Economy, and the sort of sanction which he seeks to draw from Locke, who has led many others astray, by the authority of his name, upon a subject over which he has no sort of jurisdiction; neither did that age furnish any one who had.

But if Mr. Taylor failed (as, honestly, I believe he did) in this field, in another he effected a discovery so brilliant, so powerfully sustained by evidences overwhelming and irresistible, after (be it remembered) efforts the most elaborate and numerous to solve the problem, that he certainly deserves a high place, and perhaps next to Bentley, in this species of exploratory literature. With little or no original hints to direct him in his path, he undertook the great literary enigma of Junius — Who and what was he? — and brought that question to a decision that never can be unsettled or disturbed by any person except one who is unacquainted with the arguments. I have understood, but perhaps not upon sufficient authority, that the notice of this work in *The Edinburgh Review* was drawn up by Lord Brougham. If so, I must confess my surprise: there is not much of a lawyer's accuracy in the abstract of the evidence, nor is the result stated with

the boldness which the premises warrant. Chief Justice Dallas, of the Common Pleas, was wont to say that a man arraigned as Junius upon the evidence here accumulated against Sir Philip Francis, must have been convicted in any court of Europe. But I would go much farther: I would say that there are single proofs, which (taken separately and apart from all the rest) are sufficient to sustain the whole *onus* of the charge. I would also argue thus: — If a man in one character (his avowed character, suppose, of Francis) uses a word in some peculiar sense, or in some very irregular manner, then it will become high argument against this man as liable to the suspicion of having been the masque in the assumed character of Junius, that this masque shall also be proved to have used the same word in the same anomalous way. Suppose now that any ordinary presumption, or any coincidence of ordinary force shall be considered $= x$; then I may be entitled to value this remarkable coincidence in anomalous practice as x^2; or, however, as equal to some higher power of the same order. But, now, suppose further, that Francis has also, in his mode of correcting 'proof-sheets' and 'revises' from the press, fallen into a constant misconception of the function assigned by compositors to a particular mark; and suppose that this misconception is by no means a natural or obvious misconception, but one which rests upon some accident of individual blundering; then I should say that if, upon examination pursued through a multitude of specimens, it comes out flagrantly that Junius has also fallen into the same very peculiar and *unobvious* error; in this case, we have a presumption for the identity of the two characters, Francis and Junius, which (taken separately) is entitled to be valued as a high function of x. But I say further that a *second* presumption of the same order may lawfully demand to be reckoned

as multiplying its own value into the second value. Meantime the tendency of all the external arguments drawn from circumstantial or personal considerations, from local facts, or the records of party, flows in the very same channel; with all the internal presumptions derived from the style, from the anomalous use of words, from the anomalous construction of the syntax, from the peculiar choice of images, from the arbitrary use of the technical short-hand for correcting typographical errors, from capricious punctuation, and even from penmanship, (which, of itself, taken separately, has sometimes determined the weightiest legal interests.) Proofs, in fact, rush upon us more plentiful than blackberries: and the case ultimately begins to be fatiguing, from the very plethora and riotous excess of evidence. It would stimulate attention more, and pique the interest of curiosity more pungently, if there were some conflicting evidence, some shadow of presumptions against Francis. But there are none, absolutely none.

Under these circumstances, the reader will begin to say, How came it then that the controversy about Junius, which has raged for upwards of half a century, and has already produced books and pamphlets past all numbering, (insomuch that I have heard of several persons projecting a *Bibliotheca Juniana, or Museum Junianum;*) how came it, the reader will ask, that this controversy did not drop at once and for ever, as a question summarily but irreversibly decided, as a balloon from which all the inflating air had suddenly escaped? How is it that we still see the old Junian *pompholyx*, that ancient and venerable bubble, still floating in the upper air? This may be explained out of two facts: one being, that very few people have made themselves familiar with the arguments. I have never yet happened to meet anybody who had mastered the

investigation so far as to be aware that there was anything more made out against Sir Philip Francis than some vague presumptions, founded on similarity of handwritings, and perhaps some coincidence between the main periods of Junius as to his rise and setting, with certain known critical incidents in the career of Francis. The coherence and interdependency in the total chainwork of evidence, and the independent strength of each particular link, is little known to the public. That is one reason for the non-decisiveness of this most decisive book. A second is, the absurd tradition, which has taken root in the public mind, that some all-superseding revelation is to be made upon this subject at the death of some Pitt or Grenville unknown. For many a year it was asserted, every six months, in the newspapers, that Lord Grenville was the man at whose death a final discovery was to be made, such as nobody could gainsay. And to this day, though the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Grenville, and every other person of that generation in the Pitt and Grenville families, has died and 'made no sign,' the same ridiculous legend is occasionally repeated in the newspapers. But the best possible answer to this idle fable is, simply, to ask a man for one moment's reflection upon its meaning; for what is it that any man *could* establish by his death, or by any act consequent upon his death, such as a will or codicil to a will? *Living*, perhaps Lord Grenville might have argued the case with Mr. Taylor upon the basis of his own recollections; but, being dead, what more could he possibly do than leave behind him a writing, certificate, or memorial, that somebody had told him he was Junius, or that he had personal reasons for suspecting that such or such a person might be Junius? So that the utmost result would have been to make out some rival case. A third reason is the same which

influenced Mr. Woodfall: this gentleman having long cherished the idea, an idea encouraged by various artifices on the part of Junius, that the masqued writer was a very great man, some leading statesman, it mortified him, and threw a coloring of the burlesque upon the aristocratic airs of Junius, to suppose him, after all, no more than a clerk in the War-Office. These are the common reasons for the non-satisfaction (dissatisfaction it cannot be called) of most men with the case as it stands in popular repute. But there is a *fourth* reason, stronger than all the rest, which weighs much with many even of those who have some personal acquaintance with the evidence, and (so far as that acquaintance goes) are not dissatisfied with its force. It is this, and I have once stated it at length in a private letter to Mr. Taylor; and singular enough it will be thought, that this objection to the evidence turns out, when probed, its very strongest confirmation. Thus it stands: —

People allege that Sir Philip Francis was a vain man, fond of notoriety, and, beyond all things, fond of literary notoriety; and yet he never unmasked himself as Junius, never hinted at any interest which he had in these thrice celebrated letters; and, at length, when the claim is made on his behalf by a stranger, he not only does not come forward to countersign this claim as authentic, but absolutely, with some sternness, appears to disavow it. How is this? Here lies a glittering trophy; a derelict, exposed in the public highway. People have been known to violate their consciences, under the most awful circumstances, in order to establish a false pretension to it; people have actually died with a falsehood on their lips, for the poor chance of gaining what, for *them*, could be no more than a posthumous reputation; and this to be enjoyed even in its visionary foretaste, only for a few

fleeting moments of life, with a certainty of present guilt, and at the hazard of future exposure. All this has been done by those who are conscious of having only a false claim. And here is the man who, by the supposition, has the true claim; a man, too, eminently vain-glorious; and yet *he* will not put forth his hand to appropriate the prize; nay, positively rejects it. Such is the objection, Now, hear the answer — First, he did *not* reject it. The place in which he is supposed to have done so, is a short letter addressed to Sir Richard Phillips, by way of answer to a very impertinent demand, on that worthy publisher's part, for a categorical answer to the question — *Was he, or was he not, Junius?* Now, Sir Philip *seems* to say — 'No:' and he certainly framed his letter with a view to be so understood. But, on a nicer inspection of this answer, we may perceive that it is most jesuitically adapted to convey an impression at variance with the strict construction which lurks in the literal wording. Even that artifice, however, lets us behind the scenes, by showing that Sir Philip had a masqued design before him — a design to evade an acknowledgment which, in conscience, he could not boldly and blankly refute, and which, by vanity, he longed to establish. Yet, had his been otherwise, had he even pointedly and unambiguously said *No*, we could not, in the circumstances of the case, have built much upon *that*. For we know, and Sir Philip knew, what had been Dr. Johnson's casuistry, applied to this very case of Junius. Burke having been named, improbably enough, as Junius, the Doctor said 'No:' he acquitted Burke altogether; not because he had disowned the authorship; for *that* he had a right to do, even if really Junius; since, if veracity could be supposed any duty in such a case, then it was idle, from the first, to assume a masque; a masque that would be at the

mercy of the first person who chose to go beyond others in impertinence. Surely impertinence ought to create no special right over another man's secret. And, therefore, along with the disguise, any sensible man must be presumed to take up the privilege of saying '*No*,' as one essential accessory and adjunct to that disguise. But, argued Johnson, Burke *volunteered* the disavowal; made it spontaneously, when nobody questioned him. Being, therefore not called on for this as a measure of defence, on that ground I hold him to have spoken the truth in disavowing Junius. This defence of a prudential untruth, in a case supposed, was well known to Francis. Armed with this authoritative sanction, Sir Philip — a mere lax man of the world — would readily have resorted to a falsehood, even in a case no stronger than Dr. Johnson's casuistry supposed. But, in fact, as we shall see, *his* was a great deal stronger; so that, *à fortiori*, he had the doctor's permission to make the boldest denial; and such a denial we should, in such a case, be entitled to hold as none at all. And yet, after all, he only allows himself an *apparent* denial; one which depends, for its effect, upon the haste and inaccuracy of the reader.

What then was the case of Sir Philip, which I affirm to be so much stronger than that which had been contemplated by Dr. Johnson, as a case justifying a denial of the truth? It was this: *Sir Philip Francis was* the creature *of Junius*. Whatever Sir Philip had — his wealth, his honors, his consideration, were owing to the letters of Junius; to the power which he had obtained under that signature; and to the mode in which, having obtained power like a thief, he had sold it like a traitor. Armed with that potent spell, he had made himself, first, formidable to the King and to his Cabinet; secondly, had brought himself, when thus armed, into the market for

sale. But how? By what means? I answer: By the blackest treachery; by a double treachery; by treachery as respected the way in which he rose into Junius; and by an equal treachery to his own principles, *as* Junius, in his mode of laying down that character. How is it, do we suppose, that Junius had won the national ear? Not by the means (generally presumed) of fine composition. No: but by the reputation he enjoyed of having won the ear of the King's government. And he had so; it was no false reputation. But again I say, in this case also, How? If the public could be won by such tinkling music, is any man childish enough to suppose that the care-laden Ministers of a great nation, overwhelmed by business, would find leisure to read *Cato* or *Publicola*, purely for the value of their style or their tropes? No: the true cause was, that Ministers found, in these letters, proofs of some enemy, some spy, being amongst them. Did *they* join the popular cry — 'Here is a great rhetorician?' Never believe it; but, 'Here is a great thief.' Not the eloquence, but the larceny, moved *their* anxieties. State secrets were betrayed. Francis was the spy. He picked Lord Barrington's locks; he practised daily as an eavesdropper upon Lord Barrington's private communications with Ministers: he abused, for his own purposes, the information, select and secret, which often came before him officially, in his character of clerk at the War-Office. In short, he was an unfaithful servant, who, first of all, built himself up into terror and power as Junius, on a thorough-going plan of disloyalty to his patron, and afterwards built himself up into the Right Honorable Sir Philip Francis, Knight of the Bath, Privy Councillor, one of the Supreme Council in Bengal, with £12,000 per annum; all this upon a disloyalty equally deliberate to all the principles and the patriotism which he had professed as

Junius The first perfidy would only have put a gay feather into his cap; this he improved into a second, which brought him place, honor, 'troops of friends,' this world's wealth, in short, and every mode of prosperity but one; which one was peace of mind and an unclouded conscience. Such was the brief abstract of Sir Philip's history. Now, though most men would *not*, yet there were still surviving very many who *would*, upon any direct avowal that he was Junius, at once put 'this' and 'that' together, and, in one moment of time, come to unlock what had always been something of a mystery to Mr. Francis's friends at home — viz. how it was that he, the obscure clerk of the War-Office, notoriously upon bad terms with Lord Barrington, his principal, had, nevertheless, shot up all at once into a powerful Oriental satrap. The steps, the missing gradation, would suddenly be recovered, and connected into a whole. 'Thou hast it, Cawdor!' The metamorphosis of Francis into the Bengal potentate was unintelligible: but the intermediation of Junius would harmonize all difficulties. Thus grew Francis the clerk into Junius, (viz. by treason.) Thus grew Junius the demagogue into Francis the Rajah, viz. by selling his treason. '*You are Junius?*' it would be said: '*Why, then, you are a very brilliant fellow.*' That would be the first reflection; but then would come a second on the heels of *that:* — '*And a most unprincipled knave, who rose into great consideration by filching his master's secrets.*'

Here, then, we read the true secret of his chicanery in replying to Sir R. Phillips. Had he been thoroughly determined to disavow Junius, could he have brought his heart to do so, we may be sure that he would not have needed (Junius would have known how to find clear language) to speak so obscurely as he *has* done in this

short reply. Neither would he have contented himself with any simple denial; he would have recited some facts in his life circumstantiating his denial. But this was not in his power to do; nor did he sincerely wish it. Naturally he must have clung, with a perfect rapture of vanity, to his own too famous production. Respect for his own character forbade him to avow it. Parental vanity forbade him so to disavow it, as that he could never have reclaimed it. Sir Philip Francis had been a great criminal; but his crime produced its own intolerable punishment. The tantalization of his heart when denied the privilege, open to every other human being, of claiming the products of his own brain and of his own excessive * labor, must have been a perpetual martyrdom. And, in this statement of the case, we read a natural solution of two else inexplicable facts: first, why Sir P. Francis (supposing him Junius) did not come forward to claim his work. And, secondly, why Junius, the mysterious Junius, *old* '*Nominis umbra*,' (supposing him Francis,) did not come forward to proclaim his own name. To presume Francis and Junius one and the same person, at once explains both mysteries. Upon the Taylorian hypothesis, all is made clear as daylight why Junius did not avow his name — why Francis did not claim his literary honors. Upon such an account only is it possible to explain the case. All other accounts leave it a perpetual mystery, unfathomable upon any principles of human nature, why Junius did not, at least, make his claim by means of some last will and testament. We cannot imagine that a writer, evidently under the most

* '*His own excessive labor:*' — 'Is there no labor in these letters?' asks Junius, in a tone of triumphant appeal. And, on other occasions, he insists upon the vast toil which the composition cost him.

intense worldly influences of vain-glory and ambition, should voluntarily have made a sacrifice (and a sacrifice with no apparent motive) of what, in the pardonable exaggeration of an author's vanity, must, to him, have appeared one of the greatest works in political as also in rhetorical literature. Such an act of austere self-mortification is inconceivable, except amongst the most rapturous devotees of the Romish church: shame only or fear * can avail to solve the enigma. But fear, if at all admitted as applicable to the case, could not extend beyond his own term of life: that motive cannot explain the silence of his last will and testament. There, at least, he would have spoken out to posterity, and his own surviving compatriots. 'If I live,' says he, in his Dedication to the People of England, 'you shall often hear of me.' And, doubtless, even in dying, if he forgot *them*, he would remember himself and his own really memorable pretensions. He would not forget, at least, to order some inscription on his own grave, pointing backwards to the gay trophies of him who had extorted fear from kings, and admiration from angry senates.† This he would have done: this he has not done; and a principle of shame only, operating in the way I have mentioned, is a case capable of explaining it. That case is precisely the case of Sir Philip Francis.

* '*Fear:*' — 'Sir William would meet me in the field: others would assassinate.' — *Junius to Sir Wm. Draper.*

† '*He would not have forgotten, at least, to order some inscription on his own grave,*' &c. Accordingly, there is in *The Anti-Jacobin Review*, a story told of a stranger dying at a village inn, somewhere, I think, in Buckinghamshire, and directing that no memorial should be placed upon his grave, beyond the initial letters of his name, and the motto of Junius, '*Stat nominis umbra.*' So much weight was attached to the story, that Charles Fox is said to have visited his grave. Probably the whole is a fiction.

It remains only to say, that, by neglecting to press these facts and their natural construction against Sir Philip, Mr. Taylor allowed the only powerful argument against his hypothesis to stand unanswered. A motive of kindness towards the unhappy Sir Philip himself, and consideration for the pious feelings of his son and daughter, may have influenced Mr. Taylor in this forbearance. All are now dead; and these restraints can operate no longer. But even in the lifetime of the parties, surely enough might have been hinted to maintain the impregnability of the hypothesis, without seriously wounding the sensibilities of Sir Philip. These sensibilities merited respect; inasmuch, as though pointing to a past chapter of deep criminality, it is not impossible that they had long connected themselves with virtuous feelings of remorse, and a suffering sense of honor; most assuredly they brought along with them the bitterest chastisement, by that unexampled self-sacrifice which they entailed. But all this might have been met and faced by Mr. Taylor: the reader might have been summoned in general terms, before allowing an unnecessary weight to the fact of Sir Philip's *apparent* renunciation of the claim made on his behalf, to consider two capital points; first, whether he really *had* renounced it, and in such terms as admitted of no equivocal construction; secondly, whether (even supposing him to have done this in the amplest sense, and with no sort of reserve) there might not appear some circumstances in the past recital of Sir Philip's connection with the War-Office and Lord Barrington, which would forcibly restrain him in old age, when clothed with high state characters, of senator and privy counsellor, invested therefore with grave obligations of duty; I say, restrain him from seeming, by thus assuming the imputed authorship, to assume, along with it, the responsibility attaching

to certain breaches of confidence, which the temptations of ambition, and the ardor of partisanship, might palliate in a young man, but which it would not become an old one to adopt and own, under any palliations whatever, or upon any temptations of literary gain. Such an appeal as this could not greatly have distressed Sir Philip Francis, or not more, however, than he had already been distressed by the inevitable disclosures of the investigation itself, as connected with the capital thesis of Mr. Taylor, that Francis and Junius were the self-same person.

Here, therefore, was a great oversight of Mr. Taylor; and over the results of this oversight — his discoveries — the unconquerable points of his exposure have not yet established their victory. I may, mention, however, that Sir Philip so far dallied with the gratification offered to his vanity in this public association of his name with Junius as to call upon Mr. Taylor. His visit seemed partly a sort of tentative measure, adopted in a spirit of double uncertainty — uncertainty about the exact quantity of proof that Mr. Taylor might have accumulated; and uncertainty again, about the exact temper of mind in which it became him to receive the new discoveries. He affected to be surprised that anybody should ever have thought of him in connection with Junius. Now, possibly, this was a mere careless expression, uttered simply by way of an introduction to the subsequent conversation. Else, and if it were said deliberately, it showed great weakness; for, assuredly, Sir Philip was too much a man of shrewd sagacity to fail in perceiving that, were it even possible for presumptions, so many and so strong, to be, after all, compatible with final falsehood, still a case had been made out far too strong for any man unaffectedly to pretend surprise at its winning some *primâ facie* credit.

Mr Taylor naturally declined re-arguing the case; he resigned it to its own merits, which must soon dispose of it in public estimation, but at the same time protested against having viewed his discovery in any other light than that of honor to Sir Philip; indeed, in a literary sense, who would *not* be honored (he asked) by the imputation of being Junius? So closed the conversation substantially on the respondent's part. But the appellant, Sir Philip, gave a singular turn to *his* part, which thus far had been rather to him a tone of expostulation, by saying in conclusion —

'Well, at least, I think, you can do no less than send me a copy of your book.'

This, of course, was done; and, with some slight interchange of civilities attending the transmission of the book, I believe the intercourse terminated.

Sir Philip suffered under a most cruel disease, which soon put an end to his troubled life; and my own belief is, that there ended as agitated an existence as can have been supported by frail humanity. He was naturally a man of bad and harsh disposition; insolent, arrogant, and ill-tempered. Constitutionally, he was irritable; bodily sufferings had exasperated the infirmities of his temper; and the mixed agony of body and mind in which he passed his latter years, must have been fearful even to contemplate. The Letters of Junius certainly show very little variety or extent of thought; no comprehensive grasp; no principles of any kind, false or sound; no powers, in fact, beyond the powers of sarcasm; but they have that sort of modulated rhythm, and that air of classical chastity, (perhaps arising more from the penury of ornament, and the absence of any impassioned eloquence, than from any positive causes,) which, co-operating with the shortness of the periods, and the unparalleled felicity

of their sarcasms, would, at any rate, have conciliated the public notice. They have exactly that sort of talent which the owner is sure to overrate. But the intensity, the sudden growth, and the durability * of their fame, were due, (as I must ever contend,) not to any qualities of style or composition — though, doubtless, these it is which co-operated with the thick cloak of mystery, to sustain a reputation once gained — but to the knowledge dispersed through London society, that the Government had been appalled by Junius, as one who, in some way or other, had possessed himself of their secrets.

The London Magazine, of whose two publishers (editors also) I have thus introduced to the reader that one who had also distinguished himself as an author, was at that time brilliantly supported. And strange it is, and also has been to others as well as myself, that such a work should not have prospered; but prosper it did not. Meantime, the following writers were, in 1821–23, amongst my own *collaborateurs:* — Charles Lamb; Hazlitt; Allan Cunningham; Hood; Hamilton Reynolds; Carey, the unrivalled translator of Dante; Crow, the Public Orator of Oxford. And so well were all departments provided for, that even the monthly abstract of politics, brief as it necessarily was, had been confided to the care of Phillips, the celebrated Irish barrister. Certainly a literary *Pleiad* might have been gathered out of the stars connected with this journal; and others there were, I believe, occasional con-

* '*The durability*,' &c. — It is, however, remarkable that, since the great expansion of the public mind by political discussions consequent upon the Reform Bill, Junius is no longer found a saleable book: so, at least, I have heard from various persons

tributors, who could not be absolutely counted upon, and therefore I do not mention them. One, however, who joined *The London* in 1823, I think, calls for a separate mention — namely, Clare, the peasant poet of Northamptonshire.

Our Scottish brethren are rather too apt, in the excess of that nationality, (which, dying away in some classes, is still burning fervently in others,) and which, though giving a just right of complaint to those who suffer by it, and though direfully disfiguring the liberality of the national manners, yet stimulates the national rivalship usefully; — our Scottish brethren, I say, are rather too apt to talk as if, in Scotland only, there were any precedents to be found of intellectual merit struggling upwards in the class of rustic poverty. Whereas there has, in England, been a larger succession of such persons than in Scotland. Inquire, for instance, as to the proportion of those who have risen to distinction by mere weight of unassisted merit, in this present generation, at the English bar; and then inquire as to the corresponding proportion at the Scotch bar. Oftentimes it happens that, in the poetry of this class, little more is found than the gift of a tolerable good ear for managing the common metres of the language. But in Clare it was otherwise. His poems were not the mere reflexes of his reading. He had studied for himself in the fields, and in the woods, and by the side of brooks. I very much doubt if there could be found, in his poems, a single commonplace image, or a description made up of hackneyed elements. In that respect, his poems are original, and have even a separate value, as a sort of calendar (in extent, of course, a very limited one) of many rural appearances, of incidents in the fields not elsewhere noticed, and of the loveliest flowers most felicitously described. The description is often

true even to a botanical eye; and in that, perhaps, lies the chief defect; not properly in the scientific accuracy, but that, in searching after this too earnestly, the feeling is sometimes too much neglected. However, taken as a whole, his poems have a very novel quality of merit, though a quality too little, I fear, in the way of public notice. Messrs. Taylor & Hessey had been very kind to him; and, through them, the late Lord Fitzwilliam had settled an annuity upon him. In reality, the annuity had been so far increased, I believe, by the publishers, as to release him from the necessities of daily toil. He had thus his time at his own command; and, in 1824, perhaps upon some literary scheme, he came up to London, where, by a few noble families and by his liberal publishers, he was welcomed in a way that, I fear, from all I heard, would but too much embitter the contrast with his own humble opportunities of enjoyment in the country. The contrast of Lord Radstock's brilliant parties, and the glittering theatres of London, would have but a poor effect in training him to bear that want of excitement which even already, I had heard, made his rural life but too insupportable to his mind. It is singular that what most fascinated his rustic English eye, was not the gorgeous display of English beauty, but the French style of beauty, as he saw it amongst the French actresses in Tottenham Court Road. He seemed, however, oppressed by the glare and tumultuous existence of London; and being ill at the time, from an affection of the liver, which did not, of course, tend to improve his spirits, he threw a weight of languor upon any attempt to draw him out into conversation. One thing, meantime, was very honorable to him, that even in this season of dejection, he would uniformly become animated when anybody spoke to him of Wordsworth — animated with the most hearty and al-

most rapturous spirit of admiration. As regarded his own poems, this admiration seemed to have an unhappy effect of depressing his confidence in himself. It is unfortunate, indeed, to gaze too closely upon models of colossal excellence. Compared with those of his own class, I feel satisfied that Clare will always maintain an honorable place.

Very different, though originally in the very same class of rustic laborers and rustic poets, (a fact which I need not disguise, since he proclaims it himself upon every occasion with a well-directed pride,) is another of that London society in 1821–23, viz. Allan Cunningham. About this author I had a special interest. I had read, and with much pleasure, a volume called 'Nithisdale and Galloway Song,' which professed to contain fugitive poems of that country, gathered together by Mr. Cromek, the engraver; the same person, I believe, who published a supplementary volume to Dr. Currie's edition of Burns. The whole of these, I had heard, were a forgery by Allan Cunningham; and one, at any rate, was so — by far the most exquisite gem in the volume. It was a fragment of only three stanzas; and the situation must be supposed that of a child lying in a forest amongst the snow, just at the point of death. The child must be supposed to speak: —

'Gone were but the cold,
And gone were but the snow,
I could sleep in the wild woods,
Where the primroses blow.

'Cold 's the snow at my head,
And cold 's the snow at my feet;
And the finger of death 's at my eyes
Closing them to sleep.

'Let none tell my father,
Or my mother so dear;
I'll meet them both in heaven,
At the spring-time of the year.'

These lines of Allan Cunningham (so I call him, for so he called himself upon his visiting cards) had appeared to me so exquisite a breathing of the pastoral muse, that, had it been for these alone, I should have desired to make his acquaintance. But I had also read some papers on gipsy life, embodying several striking gipsy traditions, by the same author. These were published in early numbers of *Blackwood's Magazine;* and had, apparently, introduced situations, and scenes, and incidents, from the *personal* recollections of the author. Such was my belief, at least. In parts, they were impressively executed; and a singular contrast they afforded to the situation and daily life of the same Allan, planted and rooted, as it were, amongst London scenery. Allan was — (what shall I say? To a man of genius, I would not apply the coarse mercantile term of foreman; and the fact is, that he stood on a more confidential footing than is implied by that term, with his employer) — he was then a sort of right-hand man, an agent equally for mechanical and for intellectual purposes, to Chantrey the sculptor: he was an agent, also, in transactions not strictly either the one or the other; cases which may be called, therefore, mechanico-intellectual; or, according to a pleasant distinction of Professor Wilson's, he was an agent for the 'coarse' arts as well as the 'fine' arts; sometimes in separation, sometimes in union. This I mention, as arguing the versatility of his powers: few men beside himself could have filled a station running through so large a scale of duties. Accordingly, he measured out and appor-

tioned each day's work to the several working sculptors in Chantrey's yard: this was the most mechanical part of his services. On the other hand, at the opposite pole of his functions, he was often (I believe) found useful to Chantrey as an umpire in questions of taste, or, perhaps, as a suggester of original hints, in the very highest walks of the art. Various indications of natural disposition for these efforts, aided greatly, and unfolded by daily conversation with all the artists and amateurs resorting to Chantrey's *studio*, will be found in his popular 'Lives of the Painters and Sculptors.' His particular opinions are, doubtless, often liable to question; but they show proof everywhere of active and *sincere* thinking: and, in two of his leading peculiarities, upon questions of *æsthetics*, (to speak *Germanice*,) I felt too close an approach in Cunningham to opinions which I had always entertained myself, not to have been prejudiced very favorably in his behalf. They were these: — He avowed an unqualified scorn of Ossian; such a scorn as every man that ever looked at Nature with his own eyes, and not through books, must secretly entertain. Heavens! what poverty: secondly, what monotony: thirdly, what falsehood of imagery! Scorn, therefore, he avowed of Ossian; and, in the next place, scorn of the insipidities — when applied to the plastic arts, (sculpture or painting) — embalmed by modern allegory. Britannia, supported by Peace on one side and Prosperity on the other, beckons to Inoculation — 'Heavenly maid' — and to Vaccination in the rear, who, mounted upon the car of Liberality, hurls her spear at the dragon of Small-Pox-Hospitalism, &c. &c. But why quote instances of that which every stone-cutter's yard supplies in nauseous prodigality? These singu

larities of taste, at least, speaking of Ossian,* (for, as to allegory, it is rather tolerated by the public mind than positively approved,) plead thus far in any man's favor, that they argue a healthy sincerity of the sensibilities, not liable to be duped by the vague, the superficial, or the unreal; nor, finally, by precedent and authority.

Such were the grounds upon which I looked forward, with some pleasure, to my first interview with Allan Cunningham. This took place at a dinner given by my publishers, soon after the publication of the Opium Confessions; at which dinner, to say the truth, I soon after suspected (and with some vexation) that I had myself, unconsciously, played the part of lion. At that time I was ill, beyond what any man would believe, who saw me out of bed: and, in the mere facility of unreflecting good nature, I had consented to attend, on the assurance that 'only a friend or two' would be present. However, it proved to be a general gathering, 'frequent and full,' of all the wits, keen and brilliant, associated in the literary journal to which I had committed my earliest experiences. Dinner was fixed at '*half-past five, for six;*' and, from some mistake, it happened that I was amongst the earliest arrivals. As an invalid, or, as the hero of the day, I was planted inexorably, without retreat, in the place of honor by the fireside; for the month was deep November. Judge of my despair, when there

* With respect to Ossian, I have heard it urged, by way of an *argumentum ad hominem*, in arguing the case with myself, as a known devotee of Wordsworth, that he, Wordsworth, had professed honor for Ossian, by writing an epitaph for his supposed grave in *Glen Almain*. By no means: Wordsworth's fine lines are not upon the pseudo-Ossian of Macpherson, not upon the cataphysical one-stringed lutanist of Morven, but upon Ossian, the hero and the poet, of Gaelic tradition. We scorn the Ossian of 1766. No man scorns Ossian the son of Finga' of A. D. 366.

began to file in one suspicious-looking fellow after another — (*suspicious* to me at that moment; because, by the expression of the eye, looking all made up for 'play,' and some of them for 'mischief') — one after another, I say; annunciation upon annunciation succeeded with frightful rapidity, until the small back drawing-room of our host began to overflow. I believe the fashion of *not* introducing dinner visitors to each other was just then (1821) beginning to be popular; either for that reason, or not to overwhelm my weak spirits, I was not often summoned to this ceremony: but, on two or three more select arrivals, I *was:* in such cases I had to stand formal presentation to the parties. One of these was Mr. (no, he will be as angry as O'Gorman Mahon or The Chisholm, if I say *Mr.*) Allan Cunningham; and, from the light of a November fire, I first saw reflected the dark flashing guerilla eye of Allan Cunningham. Dark it was, and deep with meaning; and the meaning, as in all cases of expressive eyes, was comprehensive, and, therefore, equivocal. On the whole, however, Allan Cunningham's expression did not belie his character, as afterwards made known to me: he was kind, liberal, hospitable, friendly; and his whole natural disposition, as opposed to his acquired, was genial and fervent. But he had acquired feelings in which I, as an Englishman, was interested painfully. In particular, like so many Scotsmen of *his* original rank, he had a prejudice — or, perhaps, that is not the word: it was no feeling that he had derived from experience — it was an old Scottish grudge: not a feeling that he indulged to his own private sensibilities, but to his *national* conscience — a prejudice against Englishmen. He loved, perhaps, this and that Englishman, Tom and Jack; but he hated us English as a body: it was in vain to deny it. As is the

master, such is the company; and too often, in the kind and hospitable receptions of Allan Cunningham and Mrs. Cunningham, or other Scottish families residing in London, I heard, not from the heads of the house, but from the visitors, rueful attacks upon us poor English, and above all, upon us, poor Oxonians. Oxford received no mercy. O heavens! how my fingers itched to be amidst the row! Yet, oftentimes I had no pretext for intermixing in the dispute — if dispute it could be called, where, generally speaking, all were of one mind.

The fact is this: — Far be it from me to say anything of Mr. Allan Cunningham's original rank, had he not taken a pride (and a meritorious pride) in asserting it himself. Now, that granted, all is plain. The Scotch, (or, to please the fancy of our Transtweedian brethren, the Scots,*) in the lower orders of society, do not love the English. Much I could say on this subject, having lived in Scotland for six or seven years, and observed closely. The Scotch often plead that the English retaliate this dislike, and that no love is lost. I think otherwise; and, for the present, I will only report my experience on last Sunday night but one, January 28, 1838, in a coffee-room of Edinburgh. I refer to a day so recent, in order that the reader may understand how little I wish to rest upon any *selected* case: the chance case which happens to stand last in one's experience may be presumed to be a fair average case. Now, upon that evening, two gentlemen were sitting in a box together; one of them an Englishman, one a Scotchman. High argument reigned between them. The Englishman alleged much and weighty matter, if it had been true, violently and harshly against the Scotch:

* It is remarkable that, for what mysterious reason I never could discover, thorough *Scotchmen* feel exceedingly angry at being so called and demand, for some cabalistical cause, to be entitled *Scotsmen*.

the Scotchman replied firmly, but not warmly: the Englishman rejoined with fierceness; both, at length, rose in a state of irritation, and went to the fire. As they went, the Scotchman offered his card. The Englishman took it: and, without so much as looking at it, stuffed it into the fire. Upon this, up started *six* gentlemen in a neighboring box, exclaiming to the *soi-disant* Englishman — 'Sir, you are a disgrace to your country!' and oftentimes giving him to understand that, in their belief, he was *not* an Englishman. Afterwards, the quarrel advanced: the Englishman throwing off his coat, or making motions to do so, challenged the Scotchman to a pugilistic combat. The Scotchman, who appeared thoroughly cool, and determined not to be provoked, persisted in his original determination of meeting his antagonist with pistols, were it on the next morning; but steadily declined to fight on the coarse terms proposed. And thus the quarrel threatened to prove interminable. But how, meantime, did the neutral part of the company (all, by accident, Englishmen) conduct themselves towards their own countryman? Him they justly viewed as the unprovoked aggressor, and as the calumniator of Scotland, in a way that no provocation could have justified. One and all, they rose at length; declared the conduct of their countryman insufferable; and two or three of them, separately, offered their cards, as willing to meet him either on the next morning, or any morning when his convenience might allow, by way of evading any personal objection he might plead to his original challenger. The Englishman (possibly* a Scotchman) peremptorily declined all challenges.

* '*Possibly a Scotchman*,' and very probably; for there are no more bitter enemies of Scotland and Scotchmen, and all things Scotch, than banished Scotchmen — who may be called renegade

'What! six or seven upon one?'

'Oh no, sir!' the answer was; not so: amongst Englishmen, if you *are* one, you must be well aware that no man meets with foul play: any one of ourselves would protect you against the man that should offer less than fair play to yourself.'

The libeller, however, intrenched himself in his determination to hear of no pistol warfare; and hence, though two of the Englishmen were of colossal build, and well able to have smashed his pugilistic pretensions, yet, as all but himself were opposed to that mode of fighting, he, in fact, took shelter under his own limited mode of offering satisfaction. The others would not fight as he, nor he as they; and thus all openings being closed to any honorable mode of settling the dispute, at the request of the company, the master of the coffee-room, with his long 'tail' of waiters, advanced to him with a quiet demeanor, but with words so persuasive, as induced him quietly to withdraw. And so terminated the dispute.

And now, let me ask, Is an Englishman likely to meet with six Scotchmen, in London, starting up on behalf of calumniated England? O, no; painful it is to tell of men whom we, English, view as our brothers, and whose land, and institutions, and literature, have in our days, been the subject of an absolute '*craze*,' or, at all events, of a most generous enthusiasm in England, that nineteen out of twenty, among those who are of humble birth and connections, are but too ready to join fervently in abuse of the land which shelters them, and supports their household charities. Scotchmen, you cannot deny it. Now,

Scotchmen. There is no enemy like an old friend; and many a Scotchman (or Scotsman — let us not forget *that*) remembers Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, simply as the city that ejected him.

you hear from my story, which is not a fortnight old, how different, in the same circumstances, is the conduct of Englishmen. *All*, observe, joined, with one consent, in the same service — and there were six, without counting myself, who did not belong to either party; and not one of my countrymen stirred upon any principle of selfish honor; none had been wounded; but upon a generous regard to the outraged character of a country which at that moment was affording a shelter to themselves, which they loved and honored, and which was accidentally without a defender.

Would that, upon such an impulse, I could have heard Allan Cunningham undertaking the defence of England or of Englishmen! But this I have *not* heard from any Scotchman, excepting only Professor Wilson; and he, to show the natural result of such generosity, is taxed with Anglomania by many of his countrymen. Allan Cunningham offended somewhat in this point, not so much in *act*, as by discovering his propensities. I, for my part, quarrelled also with his too oriental prostrations before certain regular authors — chiefly Sir Walter Scott and Southey. With respect to *them*, he professed to feel himself nobody, in a way which no large estimator of things as they are — of natural gifts, and their infinite distribution through an infinite scale of degrees, and the compensating accomplishments which take place in so vast a variety of forms — could easily tolerate. Allan Cunningham would say — 'I don't think myself worthy to be accounted an author in comparison of such men;' and this he would say, in a tone that too much had the sound of including, in his act of prostration, his hearer at the moment; who might very possibly disdain so absolute and unlimited an avowal of inferiority — a Chinese *kotou* so unconditional; knowing, as know he must, that if in one talent or one accomplish

ment he were much inferior, hopelessly inferior, not the less in some other power, some other talent, some other accomplishment, he might have a right to hold himself greatly superior; nay, might have a right to say — that power I possess in some degree; and Sir Walter Scott or Mr. Southey in no degree whatever. For example: *every* mode of philosophic power was denied to both of these authors; so that he who had that power, in *any* degree, might reasonably demur to this prostration, performed before their images. With respect to Sir Walter Scott, in particular, the homage of Allan Cunningham was the less merited, as Sir Walter had not treated *him* with the respect due to a man of so much original genius: the aristocratic phrase, 'Honest Allan,' expressed little of the courtesy due from one man of letters to another. And, in the meantime, whilst Allan Cunningham was thus ready to humble himself before a countryman of his own, who had not treated him, in public, with the proper consideration, he spoke of Wordsworth [but certainly with this excuse — that, in those days, he knew nothing at all of his works] with something like contempt: in fact, he had evidently adopted the faith of the wretched journals. This alienated my feelings from Cunningham, spite of his own kind and liberal nature; nay, spite of his own natural genius.

One — opinion shall I call it, fancy, or dream — of Allan Cunningham's is singular enough to deserve mention: he maintained that the Scottish musical airs must have an eternal foundation in nature; that is to say, must have a co-eternal existence with the musical sense, for the following most extraordinary reason; nay, considering that his veracity was unimpeachable, I may say marvellous reason: namely, that he, Cunningham, had, without any previous knowledge of these airs, invented

all or most of them *proprio marte;* so that, like the archetypal ideas in some systems of philosophers, one might affirm, upon his representation of things, that Scottish airs were eternally present to the ear of the Demiurgus, and eternally producing themselves afresh. This seemed fanciful, if not extravagant; and one at least of Cunningham's works — that which relates to Robert Bruce — is also extravagant in an outrageous degree. And, by the way, on that ground, I should have guessed him to be a man of genius, were there even no other ground; for no man but a man of genius, and with the inequality of genius, can, in one state of mind, write beautifully, and, in another, write the merest extravagance; nay, (with Cunningham's cordial assent, I presume, that I may say,) awful extravagance. Meantime, in practical life, Cunningham was anything but extravagant: he was, (as I have said,) in a high intellectual sense, and in the merest mechanical sense, the right-hand man of Chantrey, whom, by the way, he always spoke of with the highest and evidently the sincerest respect: he was his right-hand man, also, in a middle sense, or, as I have said, a mechanico-intellectual way. For example, he purchased all the marble for Chantrey; which might require, perhaps, mixed qualifications; he distributed the daily labors of the workmen; which must have required such as were purely mechanic. He transacted, also, all the negotiations for choosing the site of monuments to be erected in Westminster Abbey; a commission which might frequently demand some diplomatic address in the conduct of the negotiations with the Abbey authorities; a function of his duties which chiefly regarded the interest of his principal, Sir Francis Chantrey, as also a just eye for the effect of a monument, combined with a judicious calculation of the chances it had, at one point rather than

another, for catching the public notice: this latter function of his complex office, regarding mainly the interests of the defunct persons or his relations, and those of Chantrey, only in a secondary way.

This aspect of Cunningham's official or ministerial life reminds me, by the way, of the worst aspect under which his nationality or civic illiberality revealed itself; an illiberality which here took the shape of bigotry. A Scotchman, or Scotsman, who happens to hate England, is sure *à fortiori*, to hate the English Church; which, on account of its surplice, its organs, its cathedrals, and its mitred prelates, he has been taught to consider as the sister of the Babylonian Rome. Strange, indeed, that the Scottish Church should have been the favorite church of the poor, which began so undeniably upon the incitement of the rich. They, the rich and the aristocratic, had revelled in the spoils of the monastic orders, at the dissolution of the Romish Church. Naturally unwilling to resign their booty, they promoted a church built upon a principle of poverty and humility: a church that would not seek to resume her plundered property. Under their political intrigues it was that all the contests arose in the seventeenth century: first, by slight prelusive efforts during the long reign of James the Sixth or First; and, secondly, by a determinate civil war in that of Charles the First and Second. But in this last case, the 'martyrs,' as they are called — those who fought at Drumclog, &c. — waiving all question of their real temper and religious merits, were, upon one single ground, incapable of founding a national church: they were too few: a small body reckoned by hundreds, and not by thousands, never could pretend to represent the million of souls, or upwards, to which, even in those days the Scottish nation amounted. What I maintain, therefore, is, that no matter how the Presby-

terian Church came to have its legal establishment revived and ratified, it cannot be pretended historically, that this establishment owed much to the struggles in Charles the Second's days, by which (so far as affected at all) it was injured. This church, dated from older times, went back to those times for sanction and for arguments of its conformity to the national taste; seeing that, in those elder times, it did really count upon the great majority of the nation as its affectionate and zealous supporters: whereas, in the Cameronian days, none but the very slenderest minority, and that minority, again, not numbering any people of weight or consideration for either property or intelligence or talent — no party of any known account — no party who were even mominally known to the people of Scotland — had chosen, at any crisis in the reign of the second Charles, to join these religious malecontents. Much more might be said with truth; but this may suffice — that the insurrectionary movements in Scotland, during that reign, were, relatively to the state and to the public peace of Scotland, pretty much the same as the rising in the cotton districts at the instigation of Edwards, in the year ——, to the general stability of the British government at that era. The Church of Scotland, therefore, does not, in fact, connect itself — for any part of the impulse to which it owes its birth, however in words or false pretences it may do so — with any of the movements whether prosperous for the moment, or hopelessly ruinous, made about 1677 by the religious Whigs of Scotland. In fact, like the insurgent cotton spinners, these turbulent people were chiefly from the west. 'The Western' people they were then called, and the 'Westlanders' — so little were they at that time supposed to represent Scotland. Such is the truth of history. Nevertheless, in our insurrectionary

days, (insurrectionary I mean, by the character of the pretensions advanced — not by overt acts,) it has been a delightful doctrine to lay the foundations of the Scottish Kirk in rebellion; and hence the false importance assigned to the Cameronian insurgents. And hence partly it has happened, that Scottish nationality and hatred of England has peculiarly associated itself with the later church history of Scotland; for, as to the earlier, and really important era of Scottish Church struggles with the civil power, the English were looked to as their brethren and effectual allies: and as the Scottish Church necessarily recalls to the mind the anti-pole of the English Church, thus also it has happened, that all symbols or exponents of the English Episcopal Church, are, to a low-born Scottish patriot, so many counter-symbols of his own national or patriotic prejudices.

Thus, or in some such way, it happened that Cunningham never showed his illiberality so strongly as with reference to his negotiations with Westminster Abbey. The 'rapacity' and 'avarice' of the Church of England is the open theme of his attacks in his paper upon Lord Byron's funeral; though, perhaps, he would find it hard to substantiate his charge. Notoriously the church, whether as Dean and Chapter, or as Collegiate Corporations, or as Episcopal Sees, has ever been found the most lenient of all masters under which to hold property; and it is not very probable that the church would suddenly change its character under a treaty with a popular artist.

However, if all his foibles or infirmities had been summed up, Allan Cunningham still remained a man to admire and love: and by comparison with those of his own order, men raised, that is to say, by force of genius, from the lowest rank, (the rank in *his* case, of a working mason, as I have heard him declare,) his merits

became best appreciable. The faults of men self-taught, (the *αὐτοδίδακτοι*,) and men self-raised, are almost proverbial. The vanity and inflation of heart, the egotism and arrogance of such men, were as alien from the character of Cunningham as of any man I ever knew; and, in other respects, he was no less advantageously distinguished from his order. Hogg, for instance, was absolutely insufferable in conversation. Egotism the most pertinacious might have been excused; but the matter of this egotism was so trivial and insane, seldom relating to any higher subject than a conflict with a 'sawmon,' that human patience could not weather the infliction. In Cunningham there was rarely an allusion to himself. Some people, it is true, might be annoyed by his too frequent allusions to his own personal strength and size, which he overrated; for they were not remarkable; or, if they had been, what does one man care about another man's qualities of person, this way or that, unless in so far as he may sometimes be called upon to describe them, in order to meet the curiosity of others. But Cunningham's allusions of this kind, though troublesome at times, seemed always jocose, and did not argue any shade of conceit. In more serious and natural subjects of vanity, he seemed to be as little troubled with any morbid self-esteem. And, in all other respects, Cunningham was a whole world above his own order of self-raised men — not less in gravity, sense, and manliness of thought, than in the dignified respectability of his conduct. He was rising an inch in the world every day of his life; for his whole day, from sunrise to bedtime, was dedicated to active duties cheerfully performed. And on this subject, one anecdote is remarkable, and deserves a lasting record among the memorials of literary men. I have mentioned and described his station and its

manifold duties, in relation to Sir Francis Chantrey. Now, he has told me himself repeatedly, and certainly, from my own observation and that of others, I have no doubt of his literal veracity, that, in the course of his whole connection with that eminent sculptor, he never borrowed one single hour from his ministerial labors on account of his principal, either to compose or to correct one of those many excellent, sometimes brilliant, pages, by which he has delighted so many thousands of readers, and won for himself a lasting name in the fine literature of modern England.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LIBELLOUS ATTACK BY A LONDON JOURNAL.

THIS mention of Allan Cunningham recalls to my recollection an affair which retains one part of its interest to this day, arising out of the very important casuistical question which it involves. We Protestant nations are in the habit of treating casuistry as a field of speculation, false and baseless *per se;* nay, we regard it not so much in the light of a visionary and idle speculation, as one positively erroneous in its principles, and mischievous for its practical results. This is due in part to the disproportionate importance which the Church of Rome has always attached to casuistry; making, in fact, this supplementary section of ethics take precedency of its elementary doctrines in their Catholic simplicity: as though the plain and broad highway of morality were scarcely ever the safe road, but that every case of human conduct were to be treated as an exception, and never as lying within the universal rule: and thus forcing the simple, honest-minded Christian to travel upon a tortuous by-road, in which he could not advance a step in security without a spiritual guide at his elbow; and, in fact, whenever the hair-splitting casuistry is brought, with all its elaborate machinery, to bear upon the simplicities of household life, and upon the daily intercourse of the world, there it has the effect (and is expressly cherished by the Romish

Church with a view to the effect) of raising the spiritual pastor into a sort of importance which corresponds to that of an attorney. The consulting casuist is, in fact, to all intents and purposes, a moral attorney. For, as the plainest man, with the most direct purposes, is yet reasonably afraid to trust himself to his own guidance in any affair connected with questions of law; so also, when taught to believe that an upright intention and good sense are equally insufficient in morals, as they are in law, to keep him from stumbling or from missing his road, he comes to regard a conscience-keeper as being no less indispensable for his daily life and conversation than his legal agent, or his professional 'man of business,' for the safe management of his property, and for his guidance amongst the innumerable niceties which beset the real and inevitable intricacies of rights and duties, as they grow out of human enactments and a complex condition of society.

Fortunately for the happiness of human nature and its dignity, those holier rights and duties which grow out of laws heavenly and divine, written by the finger of God upon the heart of every rational creature, are beset by no such intricacies, and require, therefore, no such vicarious agency for their practical assertion. The primal duties of life, like the primal charities, are placed high above us — legible to every eye, and shining like the stars, with a splendor that is read in every clime, and translates itself into every language at once. Such is the imagery of Wordsworth. But this is otherwise estimated in the policy of papal Rome; and casuistry usurps a place in her spiritual economy, to which our Protestant feelings demur. So far, however, the question between us and Rome is a question of degress. They push casuistry into a general and unlimited application; we, if at all, into a very narrow one. But another difference there is between us

even more important; for it regards no mere excess in the *quantity* of range allowed to casuistry, but in the *quality* of its speculations; and which it is (more than any other cause) that has degraded the office of casuistical learning amongst us. Questions are raised, problems are entertained, by the Romish casuistry, which too often offend against all purity and manliness of thinking. And that objection occurs forcibly here, which Southey (either in *The Quarterly Review* or in his 'Life of Wesley') has urged and expanded with regard to the Romish and also the Methodist practice of *auricular confession*, viz. — that, as it *is* practically managed, not leaving the person engaged in this act to confess according to the light of his own conscience, but at every moment interfering, on the part of the confessor, to suggest *leading questions* (as lawyers call them), and to throw the light of confession upon parts of the experience which native modesty would leave in darkness, — so managed, the practice of confession is undoubtedly the most demoralizing practice known to any Christian society. Innocent young persons, whose thoughts would never have wandered out upon any impure images or suggestions, have their ingenuity and their curiosity sent roving upon unlawful quests; they are instructed to watch what else would pass undetained in the mind, and would pass unblamably, on the Miltonic principle: ('Evil into the mind of God or man may come unblamed,' &c.) Nay, which is worst of all, unconscious or semi-conscious thoughts and feelings or natural impulses, rising, like a breath of wind under some motion of nature, and again dying away, because not made the subject of artificial review and interpretation, are now brought powerfully under the focal light of the consciousness; and whatsoever is once made the subject of consciousness, can never again have the privilege of gay, careless

thoughtlessness — the privilege by which the mind, like the lamps of a mail-coach, moving rapidly through the midnight woods, illuminate, for one instant, the foliage or sleeping umbrage of the thickets; and, in the next instant, have quitted them, to carry their radiance forward upon endless successions of objects. This happy privilege is forfeited for ever, when the pointed significancy of the confessor's questions, and the direct knowledge which he plants in the mind, have awakened a guilty familiarity with every form of impurity and unhallowed sensuality.

Here, then, are objections sound and deep, to casuistry, as managed in the Romish Church. Every possible objection ever made to auricular confession applies with equal strength to casuistry; and some objections, besides these, are peculiar to itself. And yet, after all, these are but objections to casuistry as treated by a particular Church. Casuistry in itself — casuistry as a possible, as a most useful, and a most interesting speculation — remains unaffected by any one of these objections; for none applies to the essence of the case, but only to its accidents, or separable adjuncts. Neither is this any curious or subtle observation of little practical value. The fact is as far otherwise as can be imagined — the defect to which I am here pointing, is one of the most clamorous importance.

Of what value, let me ask, is Paley's Moral Philosophy? What is its imagined use? Is it that in substance it reveals any new duties, or banishes as false any old ones? No; but because the known and admitted duties — duties recognized in *every* system of ethics — are here placed (successfully or not) upon new foundations, or brought into relation with new principles not previously perceived to be in any relation whatever. This, in fact, is the very

meaning of a theory * or contemplation, [Θεωρια,] when A, B, C, old and undisputed facts, have their relations to each other developed. It is not, therefore, for any practical benefit in action, so much as for the satisfaction of the understanding, when reflecting on a man's own actions, the wish to see what his conscience or his heart prompts reconciled to general laws of thinking — this is the particular service performed by Paley's Moral Philosophy. It does not so much profess to tell *what* you are to do, as the *why* and the *wherefore;* and, in particular, to show how one rule of action may be reconciled to some other rule of equal authority, but which, apparently, is in hostility to the first. Such, then, is the utmost and highest aim of the Paleyian or the Ciceronian ethics, as they exist. Meantime, the grievous defect to which I have adverted above — a defect equally found in all systems of morality, from the Nichomachéan ethics of Aristotle downwards —

* No terms of art are used so arbitrarily, and with such perfect levity, as the terms *hypothesis*, *theory*, *system*. Most writers use one or other with the same indifference that they use in constructing the title of a novel, or, suppose, of a pamphlet, where the phrase *thoughts*, or *strictures*, or *considerations*, upon so and so, are used *ad libitum*. Meantime, the distinctions are essential. That is properly an *hypothesis* where the question is about a cause: certain phenomena are known and given: the object is to place below these phenomena a basis [ὑποθεσις] capable of supporting them, and accounting for them. Thus, if you were to assign a cause sufficient to account for the *aurora borealis*, that would be an hypothesis. But a theory, on the other hand, takes a multitude of facts all disjointed, or, at most, suspected, of some interdependency: these it takes and places under strict laws of relation to each other. But here there is no question of a cause. Finally, a system is the synthesis of a theory and an hypothesis: it states the relations as amongst an undigested mass, *rudis indigestaque moles*, of known phenomena; and it assigns a basis for the whole, as in an hypothesis. These distinctions would become vivid and convincing by the help of proper illustrations.

is the want of a casuistry, by way of supplement to the main system, and, governed by the spirit of the very same laws, which the writer has previous employed in the main body of his work. And the immense superiority of this supplementary section, to the main body of the systems, would appear in this, that the latter, I have just been saying, aspires only to guide the reflecting judgment in harmonizing the different parts of his own conduct, so as to bring them under the same law; whereas the casuistical section, in the supplement, would seriously undertake to guide the conduct, in many doubtful cases, of action — cases which are so regarded by all thinking persons. Take, for example, the case which so often arises between master and servant, and in so many varieties of form — a case which requires you to decide between some violation of your conscience, on the one hand, as to veracity, by saying something that is not strictly true, as well as by evading (and that is often done) all answer to inquiries which you are unable to meet satisfactorily — a violation of your conscience to this extent, and in this way; or, on the other hand, a still more painful violation of your conscience in consigning deliberately some young woman — faulty, no doubt, and erring, but yet likely to derive a lesson from her own errors, and the risk to which they have exposed her — consigning her, I say, to ruin, by refusing her a character, and thus shutting the door upon all the paths by which she might retrace her steps. This I state as one amongst the many cases of conscience daily occurring in the common business of the world. It would surprise any reader to find how many they are; in fact, a very large volume might be easily collected of such cases as are of ordinary occurrence. *Casuistry* — the very word *casuistry* expresses the science which deals with such *cases;* for as a case, in the declension o.

a noun, means a falling away, or a deflection from the upright nominative, (*rectus*,) so a case in ethics implies some falling off, or deflection from the high road of catholic morality. Now, of all such cases, one, perhaps the most difficult to manage, the most intractable, whether for consistency of thinking as to the theory of morals, or for consistency of action as to the practice of morals, is the case of DUELLING.

As an introduction, I will state my story — the case for the casuist; and then say one word on the reason of the case.

First, let me report the case of a friend — a distinguished lawyer at the English bar. I had the circumstances from himself, which lie in a very small compass; and, as my friend is known, to a proverb almost, for his literal accuracy in all statements of fact, there need be no fear of any mistake as to the main points of the case. He was one day engaged in pleading before the Commissioners of Bankruptcy; a court then newly appointed, and differently constituted, I believe, in some respects, from its present form. That particular commissioner, as it happened, who presided at that moment when the case occurred, had been recently appointed, and did not know the faces of those who chiefly practised in the court. All things, indeed, concurred to favor his mistake: for the case itself came on in a shape or in a stage which was liable to misinterpretation, from the partial view which it allowed of the facts, under the hurry of the procedure: and my friend, also, unluckily, had neglected to assume his barrister's costume, so that he passed, in the commissioner's appreciation, as an attorney. 'What if he *had* been an attorney?' it may be said: 'was he, therefore, less entitled to courtesy or justice?' Certainly not; nor is it my business to apologize for the commissioner But

it may easily be imagined, and making allowances for the confusion of hurry and imperfect knowledge of the case) it *does* offer something in palliation of the judge's rashness, that, amongst a large heap of 'Old Bailey' attorneys who notoriously attended this court for the express purpose of whitewashing their clients, and who were in bad odor as tricksters, he could hardly have been expected to make a special exception in favor of one particular man, who had not protected himself by the insignia of his order. His main error, however, lay in misapprehending the case: this misapprehension lent strength to the assumption that my friend was an 'Old Bailey' (*i. e.* a sharking) attorney; whilst, on the other hand, that assumption lent strength to his misapprehension of the case. Angry interruptions began: these, being retorted or resented with just indignation, produced an irritation and ill-temper, which, of themselves, were quite sufficient to raise a cloud of perplexity over any law process, and to obscure it for any understanding. The commissioner grew warmer and warmer; and, at length, he had the presumption to say — 'Sir, you are a disgrace to your profession.' When such sugar-plums, as Captain M'Turk the peacemaker observes, were flying between them, there could be no room for further parley. That same night the commissioner was waited on by a friend of the barrister's, who cleared up his own misconceptions to the disconcerted judge; placed him, even to his own judgment, thoroughly in the wrong; and then most courteously troubled him for a reference to some gentleman, who would arrange the terms of a meeting for the next day. The commissioner was too just and grave a man to be satisfied with himself, on a cool review of his own conduct. Here was a quarrel ripened into a mortal feud, likely enough to terminate in wounds, or,

possibly, in death to one of the parties, which, on his side, carried with it no palliations from any provocation received, or from wrong and insult, in any form, sustained: these, in an aggravated shape, could be pleaded by my friend, but with no opening for retaliatory pleas on the part of the magistrate. That name, again, of magistrate, increased his offence and pointed its moral: he, a conservator of the laws — he, a dispenser of equity, sitting even at the very moment on the judgment seat — *he* to have commenced a brawl, nay, to have fastened a quarrel upon a man even then of some consideration and of high promise; a quarrel which finally tended to this result — shoot or be shot. That commissioner's situation and state of mind, for the succeeding night, were certainly not enviable: like Southey's erring painter, who had yielded to the temptation of the subtle fiend,

> 'With repentance his only companion he lay;
> And a dismal companion is she.'

Meantime, my friend — what was *his* condition; and how did *he* pass the interval? I have heard him feelingly describe the misery, the blank anguish of this memorable night. Sometimes it happens that a man's conscience is wounded: but this very wound is the means, perhaps, by which his feelings are spared for the present: sometimes his feelings are lacerated; but this very laceration makes the ransom for his conscience. Here, on the contrary, his feelings and his happiness were dimmed by the very same cause which offered pain and outrage to his conscience. He was, upon principle, a hater of duelling. Under any circumstances, he would have condemned the man who could, for a light cause, or almost for the weightiest, have so much as *accepted* a challenge. Yet, here he was positively *offering* a challenge; and to whom? To a man whom he scarcely knew by sight; whom he had never

spoken to until this unfortunate afternoon; and towards whom (now that the momentary excitement of anger had passed away) he felt no atom of passion or resentment whatsoever. As a free 'unhoused' young man, therefore, had he been such, without ties or obligations in life, he would have felt the profoundest compunction at the anticipation of any serious injury inflicted upon another man's hopes or happiness, or upon his own. But what was his real situation? He was a married man, married to the woman of his choice within a very few years: he was also a father, having one most promising son, somewhere, about three years old. His young wife and his son composed his family; and both were dependent, in the most absolute sense, for all they possessed or they expected — for all they had or ever could have — upon his own exertions. Abandoned by him, losing him, they forfeited, in one hour, every chance of comfort, respectability, or security from scorn and humiliation. The mother, a woman of strong understanding and most excellent judgment — good and upright herself — liable, therefore, to no habit of suspicion, and constitutionally cheerful, went to bed with her young son, thinking no evil. Midnight came, one, two o'clock; mother and child had long been asleep; nor did either of them dream of that danger which even now was yawning under their feet. The barrister had spent the hours from ten to two in drawing up his will, and in writing such letters as might have the best chance, in case of fatal issue to himself, for obtaining some aid to the desolate condition of those two beings whom he would leave behind unprotected and without provision. Oftentimes he stole into the bedroom, and gazed with anguish upon the innocent objects of his love; and, as his conscience now told him, of his bitterest perfidy. 'Will you then leave us? Are you really going to betray us

Will you deliberately consign us to life-long poverty, and scorn, and grief?' These affecting apostrophes he seemed, in the silence of the night, to hear almost with bodily ears. Silent reproaches seemed written upon their sleeping features; and once, when his wife suddenly awakened under the glare of the lamp which he carried, he felt the strongest impulse to fly from the room; but he faltered, and stood rooted to the spot. She looked at him smilingly, and asked why he was so long in coming to bed. He pleaded an excuse, which she easily admitted, of some law case to study against the morning, or some law paper to draw. She was satisfied; and fell asleep again. He, however, fearing, above all things, that he might miss the time for his appointment, resolutely abided by his plan of not going to bed; for the meeting was to take place at Chalk Farm, and by half-past five in the morning: that is, about one hour after sunrise. One hour and a half before this time, in the gray dawn, just when the silence of Nature and of mighty London was most absolute, he crept stealthily, and like a guilty thing, to the bedside of his sleeping wife and child; took, what he believed might be his final look of them; kissed them softly; and, according to his own quotation from Coleridge's 'Remorse,'

'In agony that could not be remembered,'

and a conflict with himself that defied all rehearsal, he quitted his peaceful cottage at Chelsea in order to seek for the friend who had undertaken to act as his second. He had good reason, from what he had heard on the night before, to believe his antagonist an excellent shot; and, having no sort of expectation that any interruption could offer to the regular progress of the duel, he, as the challenger, would have to stand the first fire; at any rate, con-

ceiving this to be the fair privilege of the party challenged, he did not mean to avail himself of any proposal for drawing lots upon the occasion, even if such a proposal should happen to be made. Thus far the affair had travelled through the regular stages of expectation and suspense; but the interest of the case, as a story, was marred and brought to an abrupt conclusion by the conduct of the commissioner. He was a man of known courage, but he also was a man of conscientious scruples; and, amongst other instances of courage, had the courage to own himself in the wrong. He felt that his conduct hitherto had not been wise or temperate, and that he would be sadly aggravating his original error, by persisting in aiming at a man's life, upon which life hung also the happiness of others, merely because he had offered to that man a most unwarranted insult. Feeling this, he thought fit, at first coming upon the ground, to declare that, having learned, since the scene in court, the real character of his antagonist, and the extent of his own mistake, he was resolved to brave all appearances and ill-natured judgments, by making an ample apology; which, accordingly, he did; and so the affair terminated. I have thought it right, however, to report the circumstances, both because they were really true in every particular, but, much more, because they place in strong relief one feature which is often found in these cases, and which is allowed far too little weight in distributing the blame between the parties; to this I wish to solicit the reader's attention. During the hours of this never-to-be-forgotten night of wretchedness and anxiety, my friend's reflection was naturally forced upon the causes which had produced it. In the world's judgment, he was aware that he himself, as the one charged with the most weighty responsibility (those who depend upon him being the most entirely help-

less,) would have to sustain by much the heaviest censure: and yet what was the real proportion of blame between the parties? He, when provoked and publicly insulted, had retorted angrily: that was almost irresistible under the constitution of human feelings; the meekest of men could scarcely do less. But surely the true *onus* of wrong and moral responsibility for all which might follow, rested upon that party who, giving way to mixed impulses of rash judgment, and of morose temper, had allowed himself to make a most unprovoked assault upon the character of one whom he did not know; well aware that such words, uttered publicly by a person in authority, must, by some course or other, be washed out and cancelled; or, if not, that the party submitting to such defamatory insults, would at once exile himself from the society and countenance of his professional brethren. Now, then, in all justice, it should be so ordered, that the weight of public indignation might descsnd upon him, whoever he might be, (and, of course, the more heavily, according to the authority of his station, and his power of inflicting wrong,) who should thus wantonly abuse his means of influence, to the dishonor or injury of an unoffending party. We clothe a public officer with power, we arm him with influential authority over public opinion; not that he may apply these authentic sanctions to the backing of his own malice, and giving weight to his private caprices: and, wherever such abuse takes place, then it should be so contrived that some reaction in behalf of the injured person might receive a sanction equally public. And, upon this point, I shall say a word or two more, after first stating my own case; a case where the outrage was far more insufferable, more deliberate, and more malicious; but, on the other hand, in this respect less effectual for injury, that it carried with it no sanction from any official

station or repute in the unknown parties who offered the wrong.

The circumstances were these: — In 1824, I had come up to London upon an errand, in itself sufficiently vexatious — of fighting against pecuniary embarrassments, by literary labors; but, as had always happened hitherto, with very imperfect success, from the miserable thwartings I incurred through the deranged state of the liver. My zeal was great, and my application was unintermitting; but spirits radically vitiated, chiefly through the direct mechanical depression caused by one important organ deranged; and, secondly, by a reflex effect of depression through my own thoughts, in estimating my prospects; together with the aggravation of my case, by the inevitable exile from my own mountain home, — all this reduced the value of my exertions in a deplorable way. It was rare, indeed, that I could satisfy my own judgment, even tolerably, with the quality of any literary article I produced; and my power to make sustained exertions, drooped, in a way I could not control, every other hour of the day: insomuch, that what with parts to be cancelled, and what with whole days of torpor and pure defect of power to produce any thing at all, very often it turned out that all my labors were barely sufficient (sometimes not sufficient) to meet the current expenses of my residence in London. Three months' literary toil terminated, at times, in a result $= 0$; the whole *plus* being just equal to the *minus*, created by two separate establishments, and one of them in the most extensive city of the world. Gloomy, indeed, was my state of mind at that period: for though I made prodigious efforts to recover my health, (sensible that all other efforts depended for their result upon this elementary effort, which was the *conditio sine qua non* for the rest,) yet all availed me not.

and a curse seemed to settle upon whatever I then undertook. Such was my frame of mind on reaching London: in fact it never varied. One canopy of murky clouds (a copy of that dun atmosphere which settles so often upon London) brooded for ever upon my spirits, which were in one uniformly low key of cheerless despondency; and, on this particular morning, my depression had been deeper than usual, from the effects of a long continuous journey of three hundred miles, and of exhaustion from want of sleep. I had reached London, about six o'clock in the morning, by one of the northern mails; and, resigning myself as usual, in such cases, to the chance destination of the coach, after delivering our bags in Lombard street, I was driven down to a great city hotel. Here there were hot baths; and, somewhat restored by this luxurious refreshment, about eight o'clock I was seated at a breakfast table; upon which, in a few minutes, as an appendage not less essential than the tea-service, one of the waiters laid that morning's *Times*, just reeking from the press. The *Times*, by the way, is notoriously the leading journal of Europe anywhere; but, in London, and more peculiarly in the city quarter of London, it enjoys a pre-eminence scarcely understood elsewhere. Here it is not *a* morning paper, but *the* morning paper: no other is known, no other is cited as authority in matters of fact. Strolling with my eye indolently over the vast Babylonian confusion of the enormous columns, naturally as one of the *corps littéraire*, I found my attention drawn to those regions of the paper which announced forthcoming publications. Amongst them was a notice of a satirical journal, very low priced, and already advanced to its third or fourth number. My heart palpitated a little on seeing myself announced as the principal theme for the malice of the current number. The reader must not suppose

that I was left in any doubt as to the quality of the notice with which I had been honored; and that, by possibility, I was solacing my vanity with some anticipation of honeyed compliments. That, I can assure him, was made altogether impossible by the kind of language which flourished in the very foreground of the *programme*, and even of the running title. The exposure and *depluming* (to borrow a good word from the fine old rhetorician, Fuller) of the leading 'humbugs' of the age — *that* was announced as the regular business of the journal: and the only question which remained to be settled was, the more or less of the degree; and also one other question even more interesting still, viz. — whether personal abuse were intermingled with literary. Happiness, as I have experienced in other periods of my life, deep, domestic happiness, makes a man comparative careless of ridicule, of sarcasm, or of abuse. But calamity — the degradation in the world's eye, of every man who is fighting with pecuniary difficulties — exasperates beyond all that can be imagined, a man's sensibility to insult. He is even apprehensive of insult — tremulously, fantastically apprehensive, where none is intended; and like Wordsworth's shepherd, with his very understanding consciously abused and depraved by his misfortunes, is ready to say, at all hours —

> 'And every man I met or faced,
> Methought he knew some ill of me.'

Some notice, perhaps, the newspaper had taken of this new satirical journal, or some extracts might have been made from it; at all events, I had ascertained its character so well that, in this respect, I had nothing to learn. It now remained to get the number which professed to be seasoned with my particular case; and it may be supposed that I did not loiter over my breakfast after this

discovery. Something which I saw or suspected amongst the significant hints of a paragraph or advertisement, made me fear that there might possibly be insinuations or downright assertion in the libel requiring instant public notice; and, therefore, on a motive of prudence, had I even otherwise felt that indifference for slander which now I *do* feel, but which, in those years, morbid irritability of temperament forbade me to affect, I should still have thought it right to look after the work; which now I did: and, by nine o'clock in the morning — an hour at which few people had seen me for years — I was on my road to Smithfield. Smithfield? Yes; even so. All known and respectable publishers having declined any connection with the work, the writers had facetiously resorted to this *aceldama*, or slaughtering quarter of London — to these vast shambles, as typical, I suppose, of their own slaughtering spirit. On my road to Smithfield, I could not but pause for one moment to reflect on the pure defecated malice which must have prompted an attack upon myself. Retaliation or retort it could not pretend to be. To most literary men, scattering their written reviews, or their opinions, by word or mouth, to the right and the left with all possible carelessness, it never can be matter of surprise, or altogether of complaint, (unless a question of degrees,) that angry notices, or malicious notices, should be taken of themselves. Few, indeed, of literary men can pretend to any absolute innocence from offence, and from such even as may have seemed deliberate. But I, for my part, could. Knowing the rapidity with which all remarks *of* literary men *upon* literary men are apt to circulate, I had studiously and resolutely forborne to say anything, whether of a writer or a book, unless where it happened that I could say something that would be felt as complimentary. And as to written reviews, so much did

I dislike the assumption of judicial functions and authority over the works of my own brother authors and contemporaries, that I have, in my whole life, written only two; at that time only one; and that one, though a review of an English novel, was substantially a review of a German book, taking little notice, or none, of the English translator; for, although he, a good German scholar now, was a very imperfect one at that time, and was, therefore, every way open to criticism, I had evaded this invidious office applied to a novice in literature, and (after pointing out one or two slight blemishes of trivial importance) all that I said of a general nature was a compliment to him upon the felicity of his verses. Upon the German author I was, indeed, severe, but hardly as much as he deserved. The other review was a tissue of merriment and fun; and though, it is true, I *did* hear that the fair authoress was offended at one jest, I may safely leave it for any reader to judge between us. She, or her brother, amongst other Latin epigrams, had one addressed to a young lady *upon the loss of her keys*. This, the substance of the lines showed to have been the intention; but (by a very venial error in one who was writing Latin from early remembrance of it, and not in the character of a professing scholar) the title was written *De clavis* instead of *De clavibus amissis;* upon which I observed that the writer had selected a singular topic for condolence with a young lady, — viz. '*on the loss of her cudgels;*' (*clavis*, as an ablative, coming clearly from *clava*.) This (but I can hardly believe it) was said to have offended Miss H.; and, at all events, this was the extent of my personalities. Many kind things I had said; much honor, much admiration, I had professed at that period of my life in occasional papers or private letters, towards many of my contemporaries, but never anything censorious or harsh;

and simply on a principle of courteous forbearance which I have felt to be due towards those who are brothers of the same liberal profession with one's self. I could not feel, when reviewing my whole life, that in any one instance, by act, by word, or by intention, I had offered any unkindness, far less any wrong or insult, towards a brother author. I was at a loss, therefore, to decipher the impulse under which the malignant libeller could have written, in making (as I suspected already) my private history the subject of his calumnies. Jealousy, I have since understood, jealousy, was the foundation of the whole. A little book of mine had made its way into drawing-rooms, where some book of his had not been heard of.

On reaching Smithfield, I found the publisher to be a medical bookseller, and, to my surprise, having every appearance of being a grave, respectable man; notwithstanding this undeniable fact, that the libellous journal, to which he thought proper to affix his sanction, trespassed on decency, not only by its slander, but, in some instances, by downright obscenity; and, worse than that, by prurient solicitations to the libidinous imagination, through blanks, seasonably interspersed. I said nothing to him in the way of inquiry; for I easily guessed that the knot of writers who were here clubbing their *virus*, had not so ill combined their plans as to leave them open to detection by a question from any chance stranger. Having, therefore, purchased a set of the journal, then amounting to three or four numbers, I went out; and in the elegant promenades of Smithfield, I read the lucubrations of my libeller. Fit academy for such amenities of literature! Fourteen years have gone by since then; and, possibly, the unknown hound who yelled, on that occasion, among his kennel of curs, may, long since, have buried himself

and his malice in the grave. Suffice it here to say, that calm as I am now, and careless on recalling the remembrance of this brutal libel, at that time I was convulsed with wrath. As respected myself, there was a depth of malignity in the article which struck me as perfectly mysterious. How could any man have made an enemy so profound, and not even have suspected it? *That* puzzled me. For, with respect to the other objects of attack, such as Sir Humphry Davy, &c., it was clear that the malice was assumed; that, at most, it was the gay impertinence of some man upon town, armed with triple Irish brass from original defect of feeling, and willing to raise an income by running amuck at any person just then occupying enough of public interest to make the abuse saleable. But, in my case, the man flew like a bull-dog at the throat, with a pertinacity and *acharnement* of malice that would have caused me to laugh immoderately, had it not been for one intolerable wound to my feelings. These mercenary libellers, whose stiletto is in the market, and at any man's service for a fixed price, callous and insensible as they are, yet retain enough of the principles common to human nature, under every modification, to know where to plant their wounds. Like savage hackney coachmen, they know where there is a *raw*. And the instincts of human nature teach them that every man is vulnerable through his female connections. There lies his honor; there his strength; there his weakness. In their keeping is the heaven of his happiness; in them and through them the earthy of its fragility. Many there are who do not feel the *maternal* relation to be one in which any excessive freight of honor or sensibility is embarked. Neither is the name of *sister* though tender in early years, and impressive to the fireside sensibilities, universally and through life the same

magical sound. A sister is a creature whose very property and tendency (*qua* sister) is to alienate herself, not to gather round your centre. But the names of *wife* and *daughter*, these are the supreme and starry charities of life: and he who, under a mask, fighting in darkness, attacks you there, that coward has you at disadvantage. I stood in those hideous shambles of Smithfield: upwards I looked to the clouds, downwards to the earth, for vengeance. I trembled with excessive wrath — such was my infirmity of feeling at that time, and in that condition of health; and had I possessed forty thousand lives, all, and every one individually, I would have sacrificed in vindication of her that was thus cruelly libelled. Shall I give currency to his malice, shall I aid and promote it by repeating it? No. And yet why not? Why should I scruple, as if afraid to challenge his falsehoods? — why should I scruple to cite them? He, this libeller, asserted — But faugh!

This slander seemed to have been built upon some special knowledge of me; for I had often spoken with horror of those who could marry persons in a condition which obliged them to obedience — a case which had happened repeatedly within my own knowledge; and I had spoken on this ground, that the authority of a master might be *supposed* to have been interposed, whether it really were so or not, in favor of his designs; and thus a presumption, however false it might be, always remained that his wooing had been, perhaps, not the wooing of perfect freedom, so essential to the dignity of woman, and, therefore, essential to his own dignity; but that, perhaps, it had been favored by circumstances, and by opportunities created, if it had not even been favored, by express exertions of authority. The libeller, therefore, *did* seem to have some knowledge of my peculiar opinions; yet, in other

points, either from sincere ignorance or from affectation, and by way of turning aside suspicion, he certainly manifested a non-acquainance with facts relating to me that must have been familiar enough to all within my circle.

Let me pursue the case to its last stage. The reader will say, perhaps, Why complain of a paltry journal that assuredly never made any noise? for I, the reader, never heard of it till now. No, that is very possible; for the truth is, and odd enough it seems, this malicious journal prospered so little, that, positively, at the seventh No. it stopped. Laugh I did, and laugh I could not help but do, at this picture of baffled malice; writers willing and ready to fire with poisoned bullets, and yet perfectly unable to get an effective aim, from sheer want of co-operation on the part of the public.

However, the case as it respected me, went farther than it did with respect to the public. Would it be believed that human malice, with respect to a man not even known by sight to his assailants, as was clear from one part of their personalities, finally — that is to say, months afterwards — adopted the following course: — The journal had sunk under public scorn and neglect; neglect at first, but, perhaps, scorn at the last; for, when the writers found that mere malice availed not to draw public attention, they adopted the plan of baiting their hooks with obscenity; and they published a paper, professing to be written by Lord Byron, called, '*My Wedding Night;* and very possible, from internal evidence, to have been really written by him; and yet the combined forces of Byron and obscenity failed to save them — which is rather remarkable. Having sunk, one might suppose the journal was at an end, for good and evil; and, especially, that all who had been molested by it, or held up to ridicule, might

now calculate on rest. By no means: First of all they made inquiries about the localities of my residence, and the town nearest to my own family. Nothing was effected unless they carried the insult, addressed to my family, into the knowledge of that family and its circle. My cottage in Grasmere was just 280 miles from London, and eighteen miles from any town whatsoever. The nearest was Kendal, a place of perhaps 16,000 inhabitants; and the nearest, therefore, at which there were any newspapers printed. There were two; one denominated *The Gazette;* the other *The Chronicle.* The first was Tory and Conservative; had been so from its foundation; and was, besides, generous in its treatment of private character. My own contributions to it I will mention hereafter. *The Chronicle*, on the other hand, was a violent reforming journal, and conducted in a partisan spirit. To this newspaper the article was addressed; by this newspaper it was published; and by this it was carried into my own '*next-door*' neighborhood. Next-door neighborhood? But that surely must be the very best direction these libellors could give to their malice; for there, at least, the falsehood of their malice must be notorious. Why, yes: and in that which *was* my neighborhood, according to the most literal interpretation of the term, a greater favor could not have been done me, nor a more laughable humiliation for my unprovoked enemies. Commentary or refutation there needed none; the utter falsehood of the main allegations was so obvious to every man, woman, and child, that, of necessity, it discredited even those parts which might, for any thing known to my neighbors, have been true. Nay, it was the means of procuring for me a generous expression of sympathy, that would else have been wanting; for some gentlemen of the neighborhood, who were but slightly known to me, put the malig-

nant journal into the fire at a public-reading-room. So far was well; but, on the other hand, in Kendal, a town nearly twenty miles distant, of necessity I was but imperfectly known; and though there was a pretty general expression of disgust at the character of the publication and the wanton malignity which it bore upon its front, since, true or not true, no shadow of a reason was pleaded for thus bringing forward statements expressly to injure me, or to make me unhappy; yet there must have been many, in so large a place, who had too little interest in the question, or too limited means of inquiry, for ever ascertaining the truth. Consequently, in *their* minds, to this hour, my name, as one previously known to them, and repeatedly before the town in connection with political or literary articles in their conservative journals, must have suffered.

But the main purpose for which I have reported the circumstances of these two cases, relates to the casuistry of duelling. Casuistry, as I have already said, is the moral philosophy of *cases* — that is, of anomalous combinations of circumstances — that, for any reason whatsoever, do not fall, or do not seem to fall, under the general rules of morality. As a general rule, it must, doubtless, be unlawful to attempt another man's life, or to hazard your own. Very special circumstances must concur to make out any case of exception; and even then it is evident that one of the parties must always be deeply in the wrong. But it *does* strike me, that the present casuistry of society upon the question of duelling is profoundly wrong, and wrong by manifest injustice. Very little distinction is ever made, in practice, by those who apply their judgments to such cases, between the man who, upon principle, practises the most cautious self-restraint and moderation in his daily demeanor, never under any circumstances offering an insult, or any just occasion

of quarrel, and resorting to duel only under the most insufferable provocation, between this man, on the one side, and the most wanton ruffian, on the other, who makes a common practice of playing upon other men's feelings, whether in reliance upon superior bodily strength, or upon the pacific disposition of conscientious men, and fathers of families. Yet, surely, the difference between them goes the whole extent of the interval between wrong and right. Even the question, 'Who gave the challenge?' which *is* sometimes put, often merges virtually in the transcendent question, 'Who gave the provocation?' For it is important to observe, in both the cases which I have reported, that the *onus* of offering the challenge was thrown upon the unoffending party; and thus, in a legal sense, that party is made to give the provocation who, in a moral sense, received it. But surely, if even the law makes allowances for human infirmity, when provoked beyond what it can endure, — we, in our brotherly judgments upon each other, ought, *à fortiori*, to take into the equity of our considerations the amount and quality of the offence. It will be objected that the law, so far from allowing for, expressly refuses to allow for, sudden sallies of anger or explosions of vindictive fury, unless in so far as they are extempore, and before the reflecting judgment has had time to recover itself. Any indication that the party had leisure for calm review, or for cool selection of means and contrivances in executing his vindictive purposes, will be fatal to a claim of that nature. This is true; but the nature of a printed libel is, continually to renew itself as an insult. The subject of it reads this libel, perhaps, in solitude; and, by a great exertion of self-command, resolves to bear it with fortitude and in silence. Some days after, in a public room, he sees strangers reading it also: he hears them scoffing and

laughing loudly: in the midst of all this, he sees himself pointed out to their notice by some one of the party who happens to be acquainted with his person; and, possibly, if the libel take that particular shape which excessive malice is most likely to select, he will hear the name of some female relative, dearer, it may be to him, and more sacred in his ears, than all this world beside, bandied about with scorn and mockery by those who have not the poor excuse of the original libellers, but are, in fact, adopting the sesond-hand malignity of others. Such cases, with respect to libels that are quickened into popularity by interesting circumstances, or by a personal interest attached to any of the parties, or by wit, or by extraordinary malice, or by scenical circumstances, or by circumstances unusually ludicrous, are but too likely to occur; and, with every fresh repetition, the keenness of the original provocation is renewed, and in an accelerated ratio.

Again, with reference to my own case, or to any case resembling that, let it be granted that I was immoderately and unreasonably transported by anger at the moment; — I thought so myself, after a time, when the journal which published the libel sank under the public neglect; but this was an after consideration; and, at the moment, how heavy an aggravation was given to the stings of the malice, by the deep dejection, from embarrassed circumstances and from disordered health, which then possessed me: aggravations, perhaps, known to the libellers as encouragements for proceeding at the time, and often enough likely to exist in other men's cases. Now, in the case as it actually occurred, it so happened that the malicious writers had, by the libel, dishonored themselves too deeply in the public opinion, to venture upon coming forward, in their own persons, to avow their own work; but suppose

them to have done so, as, in fact, even in this case, they might have done, had they not published their intention of driving a regular trade in libel and in slander;) suppose them insolently to beard you in public haunts; to cross your path continually when in company with the very female relative upon whom they had done their best to point the finger of public scorn; and suppose them further, by the whole artillery of contemptuous looks, words, gestures, and unrepressed laughter, to republish, as it were, ratify, and publicly to apply, personally, their own original libel, as often as chance or as opportunity (eagerly improved) should throw you together in places of general resort; and suppose, finally, that the central figure — nay, in their account, the very butt throughout this entire drama of malice — should chance to be an innocent, gentle-hearted, dejected, suffering woman, utterly unknown to her persecutors, and selected as their martyr merely for her relationship to yourself — suppose her, in short, to be your wife — a lovely young woman sustained by womanly dignity, or else ready to sink into the earth with shame, under the cruel and unmanly insults heaped upon her, and having no protector on earth but yourself: lay all this together, and then say whether, in such a case, the most philosophic or the most Christian patience might not excusably give way; whether flesh and blood could do otherwise than give way, and seek redress for the past, but, at all events, security for the future, in what, perhaps, might be the sole course open to you — an appeal to arms.

Let it not be said that the case here proposed, by way of hypothesis, is an extreme one: for the very argument has contemplated extreme cases: since, whilst conceding that duelling is an unlawful and useless remedy for cases of ordinary wrong, where there is no malice to resist a

more conciliatory mode of settlement, and where it is difficult to imagine any deliberate insult except such as is palliated by intoxication — conceding this, I have yet supposed it possible that cases may arise, with circumstances of contumely and outrage, growing out of deep inexorable malice, which cannot be redressed, *as things now are*, without an appeal to the *voye de fait*. 'But this is so barbarous an expedient in days of high civilization.' Why, yes, it labors with the semi-barbarism of chivalry: yet, on the other hand, this mention of chivalry reminds me to say, that if this practice of duelling share the blame of chivalry, one memorable praise there is, which also it may claim as common to them both. It is a praise which I have often insisted on; and the very sublime of prejudice I would challenge to deny it. Burke, in his well known apology for chivalry, thus expresses his sense of the immeasurable benefits which it conferred upon society, as a supplementary code of law, reaching those cases which the weakness of municipal law was then unavailing to meet, and at a price so trivial in bloodshed or violence — he calls it 'the cheap defence of nations.' Yes, undoubtedly; and surely the same praise belongs incontestably to the law of duelling. For one duel *in esse*, there are ten thousand, every day of our lives, amid populous cities, *in posse:* one challenge is given, a myriad are feared: one life (and usually the most worthless, by any actual good rendered to society) is sacrificed, suppose triennially, from a nation; *every* life is endangered by certain modes of behavior. Hence, then, and at a cost inconceivably trifling, the peace of society is maintained in cases which no law, no severity of police, ever could effectually reach. Brutal strength would reign paramount in the walks of public life; brutal intoxication would follow out its lawless impulses,

were it not for the fear which now is always in the rear — the fear of being summoned to a strict summary account, liable to the most perilous consequences. This is not open to denial : the actual basis upon which reposes the security of us all, the peace of our wives and our daughters, and our own immunity from the vilest degradations under their eyes, is the necessity, known to every gentleman, of answering for his outrages in a way which strips him of all unfair advantages, except one, (which is not often possessed,) which places the weak upon a level with the strong, and the quiet citizen upon a level with the military adventurer, or the ruffian of the gambling-house. The fact, I say, cannot be denied ; neither can the low price be denied at which this vast result is obtained. And it is evident that, on the principle of expediency, adopted as the basis of morality by Paley, the justification of duelling is complete : for the greatest sum of immediate happiness is produced at the least possible sacrifice.* But there are many men of high

* Neither would it be open to Paley to plead that the final or remotest consequences must be taken into the calculation; and that one of these would be the weakening of all moral sanctions, and thus, indirectly, an injury to morality; which might more than compensate the immediate benefit to social peace and security; for this mode of arguing the case would bring us back to the very principle which his own implicitly, or by involution, rejects : since it would tell us to obey the principle itself without reference to the apparent consequences. By the by, Paley has an express section of his work against the law of honor as a valid rule of action; but, as Cicero says of Epicurus, it matters little what he says; the question for us is *quam sibi convenienter*, how far consistently with himself. Now, as Sir James Mackintosh justly remarks, all that Paley says in refutation of the principle of worldly honor is hollow and unmeaning In fact, it is merely one of the commonplaces adopted by satire, and no philosophy at all. Honor, for instance, allows you, upon paying gambling debts, to neglect or evade all others : honor, again, allows you to

moral principle, and yet not professing to rest upon Christianity, who reject this prudential basis of ethics as the death of all morality. And these men hold, that the social recognition of any one out of the three following dangerous and immoral principles, viz. — 1*st*, That a man may lawfully sport with his own life; 2*dly*, That he may lawfully sport with the life of another; 3*dly*, That he may lawfully seek his redress for a social wrong, by any other channel than the law tribunals of the land: that the recognition of these, or any of them, by the jurisprudence of a nation, is a mortal wound to the very key-stone upon which the whole vast arch of morality reposes. Well, in candor, I must admit that, by justifying, in courts of judicature, through the verdicts of juries, that mode of personal redress and self-vindication, to heal and prevent which was one of the original motives for gathering into social communities, and setting up an empire of public law as paramount to all private exercise of power, a fatal wound is given to the sanctity of moral right, of the public conscience, and of law in its elementary field. So much I admit; but I say also, that the case arises out of a great dilemma, with difficulties on both sides; and that, in all *practical* applications of philosophy, amongst materials so imperfect as men, just as in all attempts to realize the rigor of mathematical laws amongst earthly mechanics, inevitably there will arise such dilemmas and cases of opprobrium to the reflecting intellect. However, in conclusion, I shall say four things, which I

seduce a married woman; and he would secretly insinuate that honor *enjoins* all this; but it is evident that honor simply forbears to forbid all this; in other words, it is a very limited rule of action, not applying to one case of conduct in fifty. It might as well be said, that Ecclesiastical Courts sanction murder, because that crime lies out of their jurisdiction.

request my opponent, whoever he may be, to consider; for they are things which certainly ought to have weight; and some important errors have arisen by neglecting them.

First, Then, let him remember that it is the principle at stake — viz. the recognition by a legal tribunal, as lawful or innocent of any attempt to violate the laws, or to take the law into our own hands: this it is, and the mortal taint which is thus introduced into the public morality of a Christian land, thus authentically introduced; thus sealed and countersigned by judicial authority; the majesty of law actually interfering to justify, with the solemnities of trial, a flagrant violation of law; this it is, this only, and not the amount of injury sustained by society, which gives value to the question. For, as to the injury, I have already remarked, that a very trivial annual loss — one life, perhaps, upon ten millions, and that life as often as little practically valuable as any amongst us — that pays our fine or ransom in that account. And, in reality, there is one popular error made upon this subject, when the question is raised about the institution of some *Court of Honor*, or *Court of Appeal in cases of injury to the feelings*, under the sanction of Parliament, which satisfactorily demonstrates the trivial amount of injury sustained: it is said on such occasions, that *de minimis non curat lex* — that the mischief, in fact, is too narrow and limited for the regard of the legislature. And we may be assured that, if the evil were ever to become an extensive one, the notice of Parliament soon *would* be attracted to the subject; and hence we may derive a hint for an amended view of the policy adopted in past ages. Princes not distinguished for their religious scruples, made it, in different ages and places, a capital offence to engage in a duel: whence it is inferred, falsely, that, in

former times, a more public homage was paid to Christian principle. But the fact is, that not the anti-Christian character of the offence so much as its greater frequency, and the consequent extension of a civil mischief was the ruling consideration with the lawgiver. Among other causes for this greater prevalence of duels, was the composition of armies, more often brought together upon mercenary principles from a large variety of different nations, whose peculiar usages, points of traditional honor, and even the oddness of their several languages to the ear, formed a perpetual occasion of insult and quarrel. Fluellen's affair with Pistol, we may be sure, was no rare but a representative case.

Secondly, In confirmation of what I have said about duelling, as the great conductor for carrying off the excess of angry irritation in society, I will repeat what was said to me by a man of great ability and distinguished powers, as well as opportunities for observation, in reference to a provincial English town, and the cabals which prevailed there. These cabals — some political, arising out of past electioneering contests; some municipal, arising out of the corporation disputes; some personal, arising out of family rivalships, or old traditionary disputes — had led to various feuds that vexed the peace of the town in a degree very considerably beyond the common experience of towns reaching the same magnitude. How was this accounted for? The word *tradesman* is, more than even the term *middle class*, liable to great ambiguity of meaning; for it includes a range so large as to take in some who tread on the heels even of the highest aristocracy, and some at the other end, who rank not at all higher than day-laborers or handicraftsmen. Now, those who ranked with gentlemen, took the ordinary course of gentlemen in righting

themselves under personal insults; and the result was, that, amongst *them* or *their* families, no feuds were subsisting of ancient standing. No ill blood was nursed; no calumnies or conspicuous want of charity prevailed Not that they often fought duels: on the contrary, a duel was a very rare event amongst the indigenous gentry of the place; but it was sufficient to secure all the effects of duelling, that it was known, with respect to this class, that, in the last resort, they were ready to fight. Now, on the other hand, the lowest order of tradesmen had *their* method of terminating quarrels — the old English method of their fathers — viz. by pugilistic contests. And *they* also cherished no malice against each other or amongst their families. 'But,' said my informant, 'some of those who occupied the intermediate stations in this hierarchy of trade, found themselves most awkwardly situated. So far they shared in the refinements of modern society, that they disdained the coarse mode of settling quarrels by their fists. On the other hand, there was a special and peculiar reason pressing upon this class, which restrained them from aspiring to the more aristocratic modes of fighting. They were sensible of a ridicule, which everywhere attaches to many of the less elevated or liberal modes of exercising trade in going out to fight with sword and pistol. This ridicule was sharpened and made more effectual, in *their* case, from the circumstance of the Royal Family and the Court making this particular town a frequent place of residence. Besides, that, apart from the ridicule, many of them depended for a livelihood upon the patronage of royalty or of the nobility, attached to their suite; and most of these patrons would have resented their intrusion upon the privileged ground of the aristocracy in conducting disputes of honor. What was the consequence? These persons, having no natural

outlet for their wounded sensibilties, being absolutely debarred from *any* mode of settling their disputes, cherished inextinguishable feuds: their quarrels in fact had no natural terminations; and the result was, a spirit of malice and most unchristian want of charity, which could not hope for any final repose, except in death.' Such was the report of my observing friend: the particular town may be easily guessed at; and I have little doubt that its condition continues as of old.

Thirdly, It is a very common allegation against duelling, that the ancient Romans and Grecians never practised this mode of settling disputes; and the inference is, of course, unfavorable, not to Christianity, but to us as inconsistent disciples of our own religion; and a second inference is, that the principle of personal honor, well understood, cannot require this satisfaction for its wounds. For the present I shall say nothing on the former head, but not for want of something to say. With respect to the latter, it is a profound mistake, founded on inacquaintance with the manners and the spirit of manners prevalent amongst these imperfectly civilized nations. Honor was a sense not developed in many of its modifications amongst either Greeks or Romans. Cudgelling was at one time used as the remedy in cases of outrageous libel and pasquinade. But it is a point very little to the praise of either people, that no vindictive notice was taken of any possible personalities, simply because the most hideous license had been established for centuries in tongue license and unmanly Billingsgate. This had been promoted by the example hourly ringing in their ears of vernile scurrility. *Verna* — that is, the slave born in the family — had each from the other one universal and proverbial character of foul-mouthed eloquence, which, heard from infancy, could

not but furnish a model almost unconsciously to those who had occasion publicly to practise vituperative rhetoric. What they remembered of this vernile licentiousness, constituted the staple of their talk in such situations. And the horrible illustrations left even by the most accomplished and literary of the Roman orators, of their shameless and womanly fluency in this dialect of uncensed abuse, are evidences, not to be resisted, of such obtuseness, such coarseness of feeling, so utter a defect of all the gentlemanly sensibilities, that no man, alive to the real state of things amongst them, would ever think of pleading their example in any other view than as an object of unmitigated disgust. At all events, the long-established custom of deluging each other in the Forum, or even in the Senate, with the foulest abuse, the precedent traditionally delivered through centuries before the time of Cæsar and Cicero, had so robbed it of its sting, that, as a subject of patient endurance, or an occasion for self-conquest in mastering the feelings, it had no merit at all. Anger, prompting an appeal to the cudgel, there might be, but sense of wounded honor, requiring a reparation by appeal to arms, or a washing away by blood, no such feeling could have been subdued or overcome by a Roman, for none such existed. The feelings of wounded honor on such occasions, it will be allowed, are mere reflections (through sympathetic agencies) of feelings and opinions already existing, and generally dispersed through society. Now, in Roman society, the case was a mere subject for laughter; for there were no feelings or opinions pointing to honor, personal honor as a principle of action, nor, consequently, to wounded honor as a subject of complaint. The Romans were not above duelling, but simply not up to that level of civilization.

Finally, With respect to the suggestion of a *Court of Honor*, much might be said that my limits will not allow; but two suggestions I will make. *First*, Recurring to a thing I have already said, I must repeat that no justice would be shown, unless (in a spirit very different from that which usually prevails in society) the weight of public indignation, and the displeasure of the court, were made to settle conspicuously upon the AGGRESSOR; not upon the challenger, who is often the party suffering under insufferable provocation, (provocation which even the sternness of penal law, and the holiness of Christian faith allow for,) but upon the author of the original offence. *Secondly*, A much more searching investigation must be made into the conduct of the SECONDS, than is usual in the unprofessional and careless inquisitions of the public into such affairs. Often enough, the seconds hold the fate of their principals entirely in their hsnds; and instances are not a few, within even my limited knowledge, of cases where murder has been really committed, not by the party who fired the fatal bullet, but by him who (having it in his power to interfere without loss of honor to any party) has cruelly thought fit — [and, in some instances, apparently for no purpose but that of decorating himself with the name of an energetic man, and of producing a public '*sensation*,' as it is called — a sanguinary affair] — to goad on the tremulous sensibility of a mind distracted between the sense of honor on the one hand, and the agonizing claims of a family on the other, into fatal extremities that might, by a slight concession, have been avoided. I could mention several instances; but, in some of these, I know the circumstances only by report. In one, however, I had my information from parties who were personally connected with the unhappy subject of he affair. The case was this: — A man of distinguished

merit, whom I shall not describe more particularly, because it is no part of my purpose to recall old buried feuds, or to insinuate any *personal* blame whatsoever (my business being not with this or that man, but with a system and its principles); this man, by a step well meant, but injudicious, and liable to a very obvious misinterpretation, as though taken in a view of self-interest, had entangled himself in a quarrel. That quarrel would have been settled amicably, or, if not amicably, at least without bloodshed, had it not been for an unlucky accident, combined with a very unwise advice. One morning, after the main dispute had been pretty well adjusted, he was standing at the fireside after breakfast, talking over the affair so far as it had already travelled, when it suddenly and most unhappily came into his head to put this general question — 'Pray, does it strike you that people will be apt, on a review of this whole dispute, to think that there has been too much talking and too little doing?' His evil genius so ordered it, that the man to whom he put this question was one who, having no military character to rest on, could not (or thought he could not) recommend those pacific counsels which a truly brave man is ever ready to suggest — I put the most friendly construction upon his conduct — and his answer was this — 'Why, if you insist upon my giving a faithful reply, if you *will* require me to be sincere, (though I really wish you would not,) in that case my duty is to tell you, that the world *has* been too free in its remarks — that it has, with its usual injustice, been sneering at literary men and *paper pellets*, as the ammunition in which they trade; in short, my dear friend, the world has presumed to say that not you only, but that both parties, have shown a little of' —— 'Yes; I know what you are going to say,' interrupted the other, of the *white feather*. Is it not so?' — Exactly; you

have hit the mark — that is what they say. But how unjust it is: for, says I, but yesterday, to Mr. L. M., who was going on making himself merry with the affair, in a way that was perfectly scandalous — "Sir," says I,' —— but this *says I* never reached the ears of the unhappy man: he had heard enough; and, as a secondary dispute was still going on, that had grown out of the first, he seized the very first opening which offered itself, for provoking the issue of a quarrel. The other party was not backward or slack in answering the appeal; and thus, in one morning, the prospect was overcast — peace was no longer possible; and a hostile meeting was arranged. Even at this meeting, much still remained in the power of the seconds: there was an absolute certainty that all fatal consequences might have been evaded, with perfect consideration for the honor of both parties. The principals must have unquestionably have felt *that;* but if the seconds would not move in that direction, of course *their* lips were sealed. A more cruel situation could not be imagined; two persons, who never, perhaps, felt more than that fiction of enmity which belonged to the situation, that is to say, assumed the enmity which society presumes rationally incident to a certain position — assumed it as a point of honor, but did not heartily feel it; and even for the slight shade of animosity which, for half an hour, they might have really felt, had thoroughly quelled it before the meeting; these two persons — under no impulses whatever, good or bad, from within, but purely in a hateful necessity of servile obedience to a command from without — prepared to perpetrate what must, in that frame of dispassionate temper, have appeared to each, a purpose of murder, as regarded his antagonist — a purpose of suicide, as regarded himself. Simply a word, barely a syllable, was needed from the 'Friends' (such Friends!) of the

parties, to have delivered them, with honor, from this dreadful necessity: that word was not spoken; and because a breath, a motion of the lips, was wanting — because, in fact, the seconds were thoughtless and without feeling, one of the parties has long slept in a premature grave — his early blossoms scattered to the wind — his golden promise of fruit blasted; and the other has since lived that kind of life, that, in my mind, *he* was happier who died. Something of the same kind happened in the duel between Lord Camelford and his friend, Mr. Best; something of the same kind in that between Colonel Montgomery and Captain Macnamara. In the former case, the quarrel was, at least, for a noble subject; it concerned a woman. But in the latter, a dog, and a thoughtless lash applied to his troublesome gambols, was the sole subject of dispute. The colonel, as is well known, a very elegant and generous young man, fell; and Captain Macnamara had thenceforwards a worm at his heart, whose gnawings never died. He was a post-captain; and my brother afterwards sailed with him in quality of midshipman. From him I have often heard affecting instances of the degree in which the pangs of remorse had availed, to make one of the bravest men in the service a mere panic-haunted, and, in a moral sense, almost a paralytic wreck. He that, whilst his hand was unstained with blood, would have faced an army of fiends in discharge of his duty, now fancied danger in every common rocking of a boat; he made himself, at times, the subject of laughter at the messes of the junior and more thoughtless officers; and his hand, whenever he had occasion to handle a spy-glass, shook, (to use the common image,) or, rather, shivered, like an aspen tree. Now, if a regular tribunal, authenticated by Parliament as the fountain of law, and by the Sovereign as the fountain of honor, were, under the very

narrowest constitution, to apply itself merely to a review of the whole conduct pursued by the seconds, even under this restriction such a tribunal would operate with great advantage. It is needless to direct any severity to the conduct of the principals, unless when that conduct has been outrageous or wanton in provocation: supposing any thing tolerably reasonable and natural in the growth of the quarrel, after the quarrel is once 'constituted,' (to borrow a term of Scotch law,) the principals, as they are called, with relation to the subject of dispute, are neither principals, nor even secondaries for the subsequent management of the dispute: they are delivered up, bound hand and foot, into the hands of their technical 'friends;' passive to the law of social usage, as regards the general necessity of pursuing the dispute; passive to the directions of their seconds, as regards the particular mode of pursuing it. It is, therefore, the seconds who are the proper objects of notice for courts of honor; and the error has been, in framing the project of such a court, to imagine the inquiry too much directed upon the behavior of those who cease to be free agents from the very moment that they become liable to any legal investigation whatever: simply as quarrellers, the parties are no objects of question; they are not within the field of any police review; and the very first act which brings them within that field, translates the responsibility (because the free agency) from themselves to their seconds. The whole *questio vexata*, therefore, reduces itself to these logical moments, (to speak the language of mathematics:) the two parties mainly concerned in the case of duelling, are Society and the Seconds. The first, by authorizing such a mode of redress; the latter, by conducting it. Now, I presume, it will be thought hopeless to arraign Society at the bar of any earthly court, or apply any censure or any investiga-

tion to its mode of thinking.* To the *principals*, for the reasons given, it would be unjust to apply them: and the inference is, that the *seconds* are the parties to whom their main agency should be directed — as the parties in whose hands lies the practical control of the whole affair, and the whole machinery of opportunities, (so easily improved by a wise humanity) — for sparing bloodshed, for promoting reconciliation, for making those overtures of accommodation and generous apology, which the brave are so

* If it be asked by what title I represent Society as authorizing (nay, of necessitating) duels, I answer, that I do not allude to any floating opinions of influential circles in society; for these are in continual conflict, and it may be difficult even to guess in which direction the preponderance would lie. I build upon two undeniable results, to be anticipated in any regular case of duel, and supported by one uniform course of precedent: — *First*, That in a civil adjudication of any such case, assuming only that it has been fairly conducted, and agreeably to the old received usages of England, no other verdict is ever given by a jury than one of acquittal. *Secondly*, That, before military tribunals, the result is still stronger; for the party liable to a challenge is not merely acquitted, as a matter of course, if he accepts it with any issue whatsoever, but is positively dishonored and degraded (nay, even dismissed the service, virtually under color of a request that he will sell out) if he does not. These precedents form the current law for English society, as existing amongst gentlemen. Duels, pushed *a l'outrance*, and on the savage principles adopted by a few gambling ruffians on the Continent, (of which a good description is given in the novel of *The most unfortunate Man in the World*,) or by old buccaneering soldiers of Napoleon, at war with all the world, and in the desperation of cowardice, demanding to fight in a saw-pit or across a table — this sort of duels is as little recognized by the indulgence of English law, as, in the other extreme, the mock duels of German Burschen are recognized by the gallantry of English society. Duels of the latter sort would be deemed beneath the dignity of judicial inquiry: duels of the other sort, beyond its indulgence. But all other duels, fairly managed in the circumstances, are undeniably privileged amongst non-military persons, and commanded to those who are military.

ready to agree to, in atonement for hasty words or rash movements of passion, but which it is impossible for *them* to originate. In short, for impressing the utmost possible spirit of humanizing charity and forbearance upon a practice which, after all, must for ever remain somewhat of an opprobrium to a Christian people; but which, tried by the law of worldly wisdom, is the finest bequest of chivalry, the most economic safety-valve for man's malice, that man's wit could devise; the most absolute safeguard of the weak against the brutal; and, finally, (once more to borrow the words of Burke,) in a sense the fullest and most practical, 'the cheap defence of nations;' not indeed against the hostility which besieges from *without*, but against the far more operative nuisance of bad passions that vex and molest the social intercourse of men, by ineradicable impulses from within.

I may illustrate the value of one amongst the suggestions I have made, by looking back and applying it to part of my last anecdote: the case of that promising person who was cut off so prematurely for himself, and so ruinously for the happiness of the surviving antagonist. I may mention, (as a fact known to me on the very best authority,) that the Duke of Wellington was consulted by a person of distinction, who had been interested in the original dispute, with a view to his opinion upon the total merits of the affair, on its validity, as a 'fighting' quarrel, and on the behavior of the parties to it. Upon the last question, the opinion of his Grace was satisfactory. His bias, undoubtedly, if he has any, is likely to lie towards the wisdom of the peace-maker; and possibly, like many an old soldier, he may be apt to regard the right of pursuing quarrels by arms as a privilege not hastily to be extended beyond the military body. But, on the other question, as to the nature of the quarrel, the duke denied

that it required a duel; or that a duel was its natural solution. And had the duke been the mediator, it is highly probable that the unfortunate gentleman would now have been living. Certainly, the second quarrel involved far less of irritating materials than the first. It grew out of a hasty word and nothing more; such as drops from parliamentary debaters every night of any interesting discussion — drops hastily, is as hastily recalled, or excused, perhaps, as a venial sally of passion, either by the good sense or the magnanimity of the party interested in the wrong. Indeed, by the unanimous consent of all who took notice of the affair, the seconds, or one of them at least, in this case, must be regarded as deeply responsible for the tragical issue; nor did I hear of one person who held them blameless, except that one who, of all others, might the most excusably have held them wrong in any result. But now, from such a case brought under the review of a court, such as I have supposed, and improved in the way I have suggested, a lesson so memorable might have been given to the seconds, by a two years' imprisonment — punishment light enough for the wreck of happiness which they caused — that soon, from this single case, raised into a memorable precedent, there would have radiated an effect upon future duels for half a century to come. And no man can easily persuade me that he is in earnest about the extinction of duelling, who does not lend his countenance to a suggestion which would, at least, mitigate the worst evils of the practice, and would, by placing the main agents in responsibility to the court, bring the duel itself immediately under the direct control of that court; would make a legal tribunal not reviewers subsequently, but, in a manner, spectators of the scene; and would carry judicial moderation and skill into the

very centre of angry passions; not, as now they act, inefficiently to review, and, by implication, sometimes to approve their most angry ebullitions, but practically to control and repress them

NOTES.

Note 1, page 54.

["*Mrs. Grant.*" American readers will especially associate this writer with her entertaining "Memoirs of an American Lady." If De Quincey had only been quick enough to cite Milton in explanation, the good lady would have at once enrolled him amongst her friends.]

Note 2, page 158.

I HAVE somewhere seen it remarked with respect to these charges of plagiarism, that, however incontrovertible, they did not come with any propriety or grace from myself as the supposed friend of Coleridge, and as writing my sketch of slight reminiscences on the immediate suggestion of his death. My answer is this: *I* certainly was the first person (first, I believe, by some years) to point out the plagiarisms of Coleridge, and above all others that circumstantial plagiarism, of which it is impossible to suppose him unconscious, from Schelling. Many of his plagiarisms were probably unintentional, and arose from that confusion between things floating in the memory and things self-derived, which happens at times to most of us that deal much with books on the one hand, and composition on the other. An author can hardly have written much and rapidly, who does not sometimes detect himself and perhaps, therefore, sometimes fail to detect himself, in appropriating the thoughts, images, or striking expressions of others. It is enough for his conscientious self-justification that he is anxiously vigilant to guard himself from such unacknowledged obligations, and forward to acknowledge them as soon as ever they are pointed out. But no excess of candor

the most indulgent will allow us to suppose that a most profound speculation upon the original relations *inter se* of the subjective and the objective, literally translated from the German, and stretching over some pages, could, after any interval of years, come to be mistaken by the translator for his own. This amounted to an entire essay. But suppose the compass of the case to lie within a single word, yet if that word were so remarkable, so provocative to the curiosity, and promising so much weight of meaning (which reasonably any great departure from ordinary diction *must* promise), as the word *esemp'astic*,* we should all hold it impossible for a man to appropriate this

* '*Esemplastic.*' — A writer in 'Blackwood,' who carried a wrath into the discussion for which I and others found it hard to account, made it a sort of charge against myself, that I had overlooked this remarkable case. If I *had*, there would have been no particular reason for anger or surprise, seeing that the particular German work in which these plagiarisms were traced, had been lent to me under most rigorous limitations as to the time for returning it; the owner of the volume was going out of London, and a very few hours (according to my present remembrance only two) were all that he could allow me for hunting through the most impracticable of metaphysical thickets, (what Coleridge elsewhere calls 'the holy jungle of metaphysics.') Meantime I had *not* overlooked the case of *esemplastic;* I had it in my memory, but hurry of the press, and want of room, obliged me to omit a good deal. Indeed, if such omissions constituted my reproach, then the critic in 'Blackwood' was liable to his own censure. For I remember to this hour several Latin quotations made by Schelling, and repeated by Coleridge as his own, which neither I nor my too rigorous reviewer had drawn out for public exposure. As regarded myself, it was quite sufficient that I had indicated the grounds, and opened the paths, on which the game must be sought; that I left the rest of the chase to others, was no subject for blame, but part of my purpose; and, under the circumstances, very much a matter of necessity.

In taking leave of this affair, I ought to point out a ground of complaint against my reviewer under his present form of expression, which I am sure could not have been designed. It happened that I had forgotten the particular title of Schelling's work: naturally

word inadvertently. I, therefore, greatly *understated* the case against Coleridge, instead of giving to it an undue emphasis. *Secondly*, in stating it at all, I did so (as at the time I explained) in pure kindness. Well I knew that, from the direction in which English philosophic studies were now travelling, sooner or later these appropriations of Coleridge must be detected; and I felt that it would break the force of the discovery, as an unmitigated sort of police detection, if first of all it had been announced by one who, in the same breath, was professing an unshaken faith in Coleridge's philosophic power. It could not be argued that one of those who most fervently admired Coleridge, had professed such feelings only because he was ignorant of Coleridge's obligations to others. Here was a man who had actually for himself, unguided and unwarned, discovered these obligations; and yet, in the very act of making that discovery, this man clung to his original feelings and faith. But, *thirdly*, I must inform the reader, that I was not, nor ever had been, the 'friend' of Coleridge in any sense which could have a right to restrain my frankest opinions upon his merits. I never had lived in such intercourse with Coleridge as to give me an opportunity of becoming his friend. To *him* I owed nothing at all: but to the public, to the body of his own readers, every writer owes the truth, and especially on a subject so important as that which was then before me.

With respect to the comparatively trivial case of Pythag-

enough in a situation where no foreign books could be had, I quoted it under a false one. And this inevitable error of mine on a matter so entirely irrelevant is so described, that the neutral reader might suppose me to have committed against Coleridge the crime of Lauder against Milton — that is, taxing him with plagiarism by referring, not to real works of Schelling, but to pretended works, of which the very titles were forgeries of my own. This, I am sure, my unknown critic never could have meant. The plagiarisms were really there: more and worse in circumstances than any denounced by myself: and, of all men, the 'Blackwood' critic was the most bound to proclaim this: or else what became of his own clamorous outcry? Being, therefore, such as I had represented, of what consequence was the special title of the German volume to which these plagiarisms were referred?

oras, an author of great distinction in literature, and in the Anglican Church, has professed himself unable to understand what room there could be for plagiarism in a case where the solution ascribed to Coleridge was amongst the commonplaces of ordinary English academic tuition. Locally this may have been so; but hardly, I conceive, in so large an extent as to make that solution *publici juris*. Yet, however this may be, no help is given to Coleridge; since, according to Mr. Poole's story, whether the interpretation of the riddle were or were *not* generally diffused, Coleridge claimed it for his own.

Finally — for distance from the press and other inconveniences of unusual pressure oblige me to wind up suddenly — the whole spirit of my record at the time (twenty years ago), and in particular the special allusion to the last Duke of Ancaster's case, as one which ran parallel to Coleridge's, involving the same propensity to appropriate what generally were trifles in the midst of enormous and redundant wealth, survives as an indication of the *animus* with which I approached this subject, starting even from the assumption I was bound to consider myself under the restraints of friendship — which, for the second time let me repeat, I was *not*. In reality, the notes contributed to the Aldine edition of the 'Biographia Literaria.' by Coleridge's admirable daughter, have placed this whole subject in a new light; and in doing this, have unavoidably reflected some degree of justification upon myself. Too much so, I understand to be the feeling in some quarters. This lamented lady is thought to have shown partialities in her distributions of praise and blame upon this subject. I will not here enter into that discussion. But, as respects the justification of her father, I regard her mode of argument as unassailable. Filial piety the most tender never was so finely reconciled with candor towards the fiercest of his antagonists. Wherever the plagiarism was undeniable, she has allowed it; whilst palliating its faultiness by showing the circumstances under which it arose. But she has also opened a new view of other circumstances under which an apparent plagiarism arose that was not real. I myself, for instance, knew cases were Coleridge gave to young ladies a copy of verses headed thus — 'Lines on ——, from the German of

Hölty.' Other young ladies made transcripts of these lines, and, caring nothing for the German authorship, naturally fathered them upon Coleridge, the translator. These lines were subsequently circulated as Coleridge's, and as if on Coleridge's own authority. Thus arose many cases of apparent plagiarism And, lastly, as his daughter most truly reports, if he took — he gave. Continually he fancied other men's thoughts his own; but such were the confusions of his memory, that continually, and with even greater liberality, he ascribed his own thoughts to others.

An important oversight occurs in this long final note upon Coleridge's plagiarisms. The solution of the Pythagorean dark saying about beans, (concerning the appropriation of which by Coleridge such varied opinions have been pronounced,) does not need to be sought in German editions of Pythagoras, nor in the traditions of academic tuition: it is to be found in Plutarch. An hour or two after I had sent off this final note to the press, [distant unfortunately seven miles, and accessible only by a *discontinuous* or zigzag line of communications,] I remembered from a foot-note on Jeremy Taylor's 'Holy Living,' the following reference to Plutarch; which the bishop has chosen (against his usual practice) to give in Latin rather than in Greek: — '*Fabis abstine*,' dixit Pythagoras, 'olim enim magistratus per suffragia fabis lata creabantur.' *Abstain from beans*, said Pythagoras, for in former times magisterial offices were created through suffrages conveyed by beans.

Note 3, page 192.

"*Pretty broken English.*" Published in Richardson's correspondence.

Note 4, page 292.

"*The farthest depths of Canada.*" The English language is travelling fast towards the fulfilment of its destiny. Through the influence of the dreadful Republic,* that within the thirty

* Not many months ago, the blind hostility of the Irish newspaper editors in America forged a ludicrous estimate of the Irish numer-

last years has run through all the stages of infancy into the first stage of maturity, and through the English colonies — African, Canadian, Indian, Australian — the English language (and, therefore, the English literature) is running forward towards its ultimate mission of eating up, like Aaron's rod, all other languages. Even the German and the Spanish will inevitably sink before it; perhaps within 100 or 150 years. In the recesses of California, in the vast solitudes of Australia, "The Churchyard amongst the Mountains," from Wordsworth's "Excursion," and many a scene of his shorter poems, will be read, even as now Shakspere is read amongst the forests of Canada. All which relates to the writer of these poems will then bear a value of the same kind as that which attaches to our personal memorials (unhappily so slender) of Shakspere.

Note 5, page 436.

"*Some shade of discountenance.*" But still nothing at all in England by comparison with its gloomy excess in Scotland. In the present generation, the rancorous bigotry of this feeling has been considerably mitigated. But, if the reader wishes to view it in its ancient strength, I advise him to look into the "Life of Alexander Alexander" (2 vols. 1830). He was a poor outcast, whose latter days were sheltered from ruin by the munificence of the late Mr. Blackwood, senior.

preponderance in the United States, from which it was inferred, as at least a possibility, that the Irish Celtic language might come to dispute the preëminence with the English. Others anticipated the same destiny for the German. But, in the mean time, the unresting career of the law-courts, of commerce, and of the national Senate, that cannot suspend themselves for an hour, reduce the case to this dilemma: If the Irish and the Germans in the United States adapt their general schemes of education to the service of their public ambition, they must begin by training themselves to the use of the language now prevailing on all the available stages of ambition. On the other hand, by refusing to do this, they lose at the very outset every point of advantage. In other words, adopting the English, they renounce the contest — *not* adopting it, they disqualify themselves for the contest.

Note 6, page 454.

[" *The first heavy wound.*" The reference is to the death of little Kate Wordsworth, spoken of later in the volume. In the latest edition of his writings, De Quincey adds at this point the following passage : —]

" From a gathering of years, far ahead of the events, looking back by accident to this whole little cottage romance of Blentarn Ghyll, with its ups and downs, its lights and shadows, and its fitful alternations, of grandeur derived from mountain solitude, and of humility derived from the very lowliest poverty, its little faithful Agnes keeping up her records of time in harmony with the mighty world outside, and feeding the single cow — the total ' estate ' of the new-made orphans — I thought of that beautiful Persian apologue, where some slender drop, or crystallizing filament, within the shell of an oyster, fancies itself called upon to bewail its own obscure lot — consigned apparently and irretrievably to the gloomiest depths of the Persian Gulf. But changes happen, good and bad luck will fall out, even in the darkest depths of the Persian Gulf ; and messages of joy can reach those that wait in silence, even where no post-horn has ever sounded. Behold ! the slender filament has ripened into the most glorious of pearls. In a happy hour for himself, some diver from the blossoming forests of Ceylon brings up to heavenly light the matchless pearl ; and very soon that solitary crystal drop, that had bemoaned its own obscure lot, finds itself glorifying the central cluster in the tiara bound upon the brow of him who signed himself ' King of kings,' the Shah of Persia, and that shook all Asia from the Indus to the Euphrates. Not otherwise was the lot of little Agnes — faithful to duties so suddenly revealed amidst terrors ghostly as well as earthly — paying down her first tribute of tears to an affliction that seemed past all relief, and such, that at first she with her brothers and sisters seemed foundering simultaneously with her parents in one mighty darkness. And yet, because, under the strange responsibilities which had suddenly surprised her, she sought counsel and strength from God, teaching her

brothers and sisters to do the same, and seemed (when alone at midnight) to hear her mother's voice calling to her from the hills above, one moon had scarcely finished its circuit, before the most august ladies on our planet were reading, with sympathizing tears, of Agnes Green; and from the towers of Windsor Castle came gracious messages of inquiry to little, lowly Blentarn Ghyll."

Note 7, page 459.

"*To his only friend.*" This story has been made the subject of a separate poem, entitled "The Student of St. Bees," by my friend Mr. James Payn of Cambridge. The volume is published by Macmillan, Cambridge, and contains thoughts of great beauty, too likely to escape the vapid and irreflective reader.

Note 8, page 507.

["*L*——." The heading of the chapter supplies the name Lloyd for all these innocently enigmatical dashes.]

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